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Listening to the Divine Lyre: Greek Epigrams and Theories of Lyric

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LISTENING TO THE DIVINE LYRE:

GREEK EPIGRAMS AND THEORIES OF LYRIC

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Signature Allen Helmstetter

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ABSTRACT

I ask whether or not the Lyric can be defined solely in structural terms as a self-referential linguistic artifact, and if so, in what sense we should construe the poem's relationship to the world and to knowledge. Using close readings of ancient and classical Greek epigrams, I first turn to Michael Riffaterre's semiotics of poetry, in which it is proposed that the sign/signifier relationships generated in the text of poems can be exhausted in principle in an intertextual system of signs that makes no reference to the world. I then turn to Paul de Man, who suspects that Riffaterre may be conflating semiotics with interpretation in a rationalistic attempt to account fully for the nature of literary language. This critique serves as a bridge to a brief look at Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain's contention that the lyric poem displays both a rational correspondence to a linguistic system and a pre-rational connection to the body and soul. His comments are compared to those of Julia Kristeva, who asserts that the body itself is the matrix of signification and that this phenomenon is foregrounded in poetic language. This primal relationship of experience to language leads to an examination of Martin Heidegger's advice to philosophers to "listen to the poets." His contention that language is a gift of Being that comes to us through the poet is analyzed in the light of de Man's criticism that Heidegger, in his eagerness to attain transcendence via language, oversteps the boundaries of legitimate philosophical inquiry. Then it is taken up in the context of Paul Ricoeur's more generous appraisal that poetic

language, understood as a form of linguistically innovative metaphor, can transcend semiosis to achieve a revelation of some new aspect of the world.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When asked to define poetry, Dr. Johnson remarked that "it is much easier to say what it is not" and further likened the task to explaining the phenomenon of light: "We all *know* what light is, but it is not very easy to *tell* what it is." The Lexicographer had demurred, at least this once, at making definitions. With this cautionary tale in mind, I try nevertheless in this series of essays to discover something to "tell" about poetry, especially about the tradition of Lyric, that will contribute to an understanding of what it is and what it is not. I am particularly interested in exploring whether or not we can define a lyric poem solely in structural terms as a self-referential linguistic artifact, and if so, in what sense we should construe the poem's relationship to the world and to knowledge. I draw many of my examples of lyric poems from one of the major sources of Western Lyric, ancient and classical Greek poetry, especially the epigrams preserved in the *Greek Anthology*. To guide these readings, I engage the ideas of several modern and contemporary literary critics and philosophers who have described lyric poetry as that subset of language that most clearly foregrounds the issues involved in comparing so-called literary language with so-called ordinary language.

Before beginning this quest for an adequate characterization of Lyric, however, some distinctions have to be made in regard to the word *lyric* and some of its related

forms, especially the adjective *lyrical* and the noun that names the concept of being lyrical, *lyricism*. Lyric as the noun that names a subset of the genre of poetry is derived of course from the historical sense that some poems can be recognized as being lyrical. That notion, in turn, can be traced etymologically to the Greek word for the musical instrument, *lyre* [χέλυ], that was used to accompany singers in ancient and classical Greece. Being described as lyrical is associated, however, not so much with the instrument itself as with the music of song. That which can be characterized as being "song-ful" can be described as lyrical. The adjective has become synesthetic, that is, it can be used to describe works in all the fields of fine art, including poetry. The case of poetry is especially complicated, however, because the words to the songs first sung to the accompaniment of the lyre, which are now called "the lyrics," eventually evolved into the genre of lyric poetry. There is, therefore, such a close affinity between musical lyricism and poetic lyricism that it is difficult to discern where one ends and the other begins. Melodies traditionally are described as lyrical when their movement and tone are extraordinarily expressive of a subject's emotional state. Both an aesthetic judgment ("extraordinarily expressive") and judgment of category (lyric as opposed, for example, to narrative) are involved in the ascription of the adjective. Visual artists have appropriated the term as a way to describe an intangible yet somehow perceptible movement of tone and color in painting that might be said either to mimic *melos*, or, it might be argued, to embody what *melos* is, not just for music, but for all the arts. Koshiro Onchi, for example, has described his painting in general as a "lyrical" art form, and an entire series of his paintings, which he named "lyrique," (1932) was "intended as visual analogies of his responses to hearing works of

[impressionist and modern] composers" (Fiorillo). Onchi wrote in the same year that "there was an equivalence between the sounds in music and colors and shapes in the pictorial arts" (qtd. in Fiorillo).[1] Other fine art forms—sculpture, dance, even cinema—also use *lyrical* to describe a certain musical quality inherent to a work. The term, then, seems paradoxically to be forever tied to, yet separable from, its musical origin. A song is not necessarily or only lyrical when accompanied by a lyre; a melody played upon a lyre is not *thereby* lyrical, although it may indeed be so. If a poem, however, was first deemed "lyrical" because its effect on the listener resembled that of a lyrical melody, it might seem sufficient to define the lyric poem, or the genre of Lyric, as that poetry which owes its development to music, whose essence is music, and whose essential qualities may therefore be exhausted in the metaphor of music. Insofar as music is ultimately inexpressible in words, and insofar as lyricism is defined in musical terms, lyricism, or the quality of being lyrical, would remain intact as the ineffable "muse" not only of music, but the other fine arts and poetry as well.

In the realm of music, song may be the happy marriage of words and melody. The question remains, however, of what happens when the words of a song are divorced from the melody to be fixed in print and subsequently "performed" by the solitary reader. This is the process that is recognized to have happened in ancient Greece, where before the development of the alphabet and reading, song and performance were inextricably linked. Often the words do not fare well on their own; they resolve into sentimentality and melodrama, as a quick look at the texts (lyrics) of hundreds of popular songs would attest. On the other hand, sometimes they succeed in remaining intellectually viable and even, we

would say, "lyrical." At any rate, I suggest in this series of essays that poetry occupies a special category of art form in terms of its relationship to music because its medium of expression is the word. Words bear a *logos* that transcends emotion because they necessarily engage the cognitive world of discourse with the intent of referring to the world.

To support this hypothesis, I follow a course of investigation that enters the mysterious relationship of music and words in the context of several theoretical approaches to Lyric, beginning with the semiotic approach of Michael Riffaterre. I place Riffaterre's semiotic method of approaching poetry in the historical context of the structuralist movement in literary criticism in general, which made certain assumptions about language (borrowed largely from early modern positivist philosophy) that affected structuralists' views on the cognitive status of literary language. The poem is, for Riffaterre, a system of signs that can be understood in the structural context of the relationship of signifier to signified, that is, by explicating or pointing out the semiotic relationships of the poem as a whole to other texts. In the case of poetry, these relationships are at first obscured by language that purports to mirror the real world, the world of empirical objects as described in the language of science. The more sophisticated readers become, however, the quicker they recognize that this mimicry is an illusion, and they then move on to a second, truly semiotic reading.[2] I give a generous reading to Riffaterre to investigate in what way or ways his semiotic analysis of poetic texts contributes to the understanding of how Lyric achieves its effects, that is, how a reader successfully negotiates a reading so as finally to understand the poem in a manner that can

be expressed in so-called non-figural language. Using examples both of Riffaterre's choosing (usually modern French poems) and very early examples of Greek lyric (in the form of the epigram), I try to determine what his method yields, and it does yield a considerable harvest. As Paul de Man observes, discerning in what way a poem is itself a signifier in a larger system of literary signs can give readers a remarkable insight into a given poem's textual genealogy. In addition, in response to de Man's friendly critique, Riffaterre is coaxed into speculating that there is indeed an extra-textual factor at work in the genesis (and therefore of the genealogy) of a poem that is an essential characteristic of poetry (if not a definition) namely, prosopopeia—the performance of an address or dialogue, first between poet and world and then between reader and text. At the same time, I take seriously de Man's warning that Riffaterre's method, useful as it is as a pedagogical tool, may blind the reader to this surplus. It is not exhausted in the rigor of structuralist analysis; it is accessible only by way of a hermeneutic—the understanding of a text beyond its function in a system. This is the thrust of his critique of Riffaterre, and I explore it further in the following chapters.

Chapter Two takes up two approaches to the question of whether the origin or genesis of literary texts can be recovered from previous texts (at least sufficiently to make them explicable) or whether we must posit an important and material aspect of textuality that escapes a system of linguistic signs because its source lies elsewhere. First, I look at Julia Kristeva's argument, as set forth in her *Revolution in Poetic Language*, that the genesis of text lies in a matrix of bodily, therefore material, impulses that are only later captured in the diachronic architecture of linguistic systems. I try to explicate further her

complex and polysemous approach by comparing it to the aesthetic philosophy of Jacques Maritain, whose assimilation of Freudian psychology into a Thomistic approach to art strikes me as substantially prefiguring and supporting Kristeva's insights. Maritain's discussion of literary texts, like Kristeva's, makes central the issue of the poem's relation to the world. He suggests that the genesis of literary texts begins with an individual's burgeoning knowledge of the world before it is textually constructed by mind. Although that knowledge of the world must be conveyed through the structure of a linguistic and semiotic system, it remains connected to the world by its intention to refer. This conclusion is at odds, of course, with a positivist approach to literary language that assigns to literary language a purely affective role, chiefly illustrated by its use of rhetorical figures. As a cognitive activity it plays a broader role in contributing to human experience, according to Kristeva and Maritain, than merely providing emotional color.

In order to explore further this broadening of the base of literary texts (especially as foregrounded in the Lyric), I move in Chapter Three to a discussion of Martin Heidegger's appropriation of Friedrich Hölderlin's lyric poems to explicate his own project of the recovery of philosophical wonder about existence, the origins of which he finds in the writing of the pre-Socratics. In his word studies of Anaximander, Parmenides, and Heraclitus he claims to recover a sense in which language can open out upon a space, however fleetingly, that provides a glimpse into Being. This language is before discourse, therefore inaccessible to the philosopher, but available to the poet. From Heidegger's perspective, Hölderlin, as well as some of the ancient Greek poets that he occasionally references (especially Pindar) grasped this dilemma. His philosophical lyrics are a

testament, according to Heidegger, to Hölderlin's tragic recognition that he, as a poet, could speak about his journey into the realm of Being and therefore enable others to recognize Being, but that it was unlikely that he as poet would be heard. For Heidegger, it was the very delicate task of the philosopher to listen to the poets' words and ponder them "out loud" for others, all the time running the danger, just like the poet, of having these thoughts devolve into mere discourse—a system of signs. In keeping with this "listening," I try to explicate at some length Pindar's Olympian Ode IX, in which Pindar articulates what Heidegger calls the poet's "measuring" of Being, the broad overarching relationships between earth and sky, humans and gods.

Finally, in Chapter Four, I examine the approach to language taken by Paul Ricoeur, especially in his *Rule of Metaphor,* in which he suggests that metaphor, traditionally taken as the chief analog or metonym of literary expression, is that aspect of language, most noticeable in literary language and specifically in poetry, that makes available to cognition formerly hidden aspects of the world, thereby contributing to our knowledge of it. If literature might be said to non-referential in its fictionality, it does refer nevertheless, according to Ricoeur, at another level to (borrowing Heidegger's term) a possibility of Being that cannot be captured in a system of linguistic signs. Language therefore at some point transcends its own system.

Taken together, these essays suggest that structuralists in the field of literary theory acceded early on and too readily to modern philosophical positivism. This approach did open up a new realm of study in which long and often fruitless discussions about an author's intent or a particular reader's interpretation could be set aside in favor of what

seemed like a more scientific and pragmatic discussion of discovering universal ways in which literary language is structured to achieve rhetorical effects within the genres. It did not, however, abrogate the conclusions of philosophical positivism; it merely sidestepped them. Structuralism's concession to positivism meant that hermeneutics in literature came to be seen as divorced from serious discourse as had theology and metaphysics to the positivists; the rhetoric of figural language could never yield a stable interpretation. Literary structuralists, and those who followed them in semiotics, had no real quarrel, therefore, with postmodernists who lamented, or alternatively, rejoiced over the death of meaning, except to note with some trepidation that the universal claims of structuralism might soon come under attack, as they did. Eventually, structuralism was caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, the structuralist wants to assert that the structures of language and, for semiotics, the systems of signs, that allow readers to recognize language as literary artifacts are universal in such a way that we can understand what a given work "says" or signs. We therefore can interpret, that is to say, translate or decode a work, on the basis of these universal characteristics into a language that is not literary but truly meaningful and capable of a hermeneutic because it is cognitive; it engages the real world. Philosophers of language, in the meantime, were having their own discussions about what language is and how it refers to the world. So-called postmodern literary critics, such as Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida, were inclined to characterize all language, even the metalanguage of theory and philosophy, as intrinsically rhetorical, leaving them skeptical about the role of logic and truth in any analysis, and collapsing literary theory

(including structuralism and semiotics) and literary language into one genre or language game. This move left theorists little to say *about* literature; they could only join in its production.

The monumental efforts of the structuralists, therefore, led to a curious effect. By looking at the structure of a literary work, we could discover not only how it worked, but an understanding of its central content as well, however much that understanding would be limited, in one person's understanding, by the impossibility of perceiving the infinity of signifier/signified relationships within a linguistic system. But this structuralist "understanding" has a necessary if obscure relationship to hermeneutics, and the question remains as to whether or not there is something in the literary work that escapes the strictures of system and refers to the world, or even a new world. Next to Riffaterre, then, I juxtapose theorists such as De Man, Heidegger, Maritain, Kristeva, and Ricoeur, who labor to explain that literary language, as foregrounded most noticeably in the lyric poem, grows out of a "matrix" of material human experience that precedes language acquisition, yet is expressible within and even *despite* a system of signs that is exhausted in the logic of its structure. This expression, the offspring of the union of nonlanguage and language, is anchored in experience of the world and is open as well to new experiences of the world, and ready to be translated, as it were, into the discourse by which we understand the world. It therefore rises beyond mere affect, or feelings of experience, to the level of knowledge. According to Heidegger, this expression in words is unique to poetry, but he ventures to align it with philosophy, which also attempts an understanding of the world. For Ricoeur, the expression, although foregrounded in literary language in general, is a

characteristic of the potency of all uses of language to re-describe the world and thereby add to our knowledge of it.

In the context of Ricoeur's argument, I suggest that there are two orders of reference exhibited in literary language in general. The first takes place within the system of signifiers and signified that refer to a linguistic sign discoverable in the fabric of existing texts. Once this cipher is solved, that is, once the sign is found, the work can be said to be explicated, and this explanation yields a type of understanding. While it is true, then, that in literary language, the visible, surface features of a literary work guide the reader to cancel a *prima facie* reference to the world, this same nullification of original reference generates a second-order reference to the world that extends beyond the linguistic system in which it gained expression. This second reference occurs when the reader recognizes (perhaps not without the help of the text's affective features) that something new has been proposed for consideration as knowledge.

This model of reading, derived from Ricoeur's bifurcated analysis of language, brings us full circle to Riffaterre's suggestion that the essence of lyric poetry might be best expressed as prosopopeia. He concedes to de Man that in poetry at least there is always a material reference to an author, who by virtue of inscribing the poem, has set in motion an hypothesis that is expressed as a dialogue between the writer and the world, a kind of masque that, for the reader, must first be read as an obvious fiction that dispenses with both the author and the world. The last section of Chapter Four, in fact, reviews a variety of prosopopeiaic structures at work in ancient and classical Greek epigrams, demonstrating that a variety of forms of dialogues exist. A new dialogue begins when the

poem, almost in spite of the linguistic system from which it takes its form, speaks to the reader in what Heidegger would call the language of Being, proposing a new way of experiencing the world that allows for an engagement of being with Being, and which in turn yields a new understanding of the world.

CHAPTER II

INSCRIPTION ABOVE AND BELOW: THE GREEK EPIGRAM AND MICHAEL RIFFATERRE'S HYPOGRAM

ἄγι δὴ χέλυ δῖα μοι λέγε
φωνάεσσα δὲ γίνεο. — Σαπφώ

Come, divine lyre, speak to me and find yourself a voice. — Sappho

The Development of Greek Lyric

In his *Greek Lyric Poetry*, Willis Barnstone characterizes the Lyric as "simply . . . a short poem that sings" (16).[3] C. M. Bowra also proposes melody as Lyric's defining metaphor: "In the main it [Lyric] refers . . . to poetry which, if not actually sung, has in itself an element of song" (1). Of course, the singing of songs was ubiquitous in ancient Greek society, and as Eric Havelock observes, "'Poets' were not read in their own day but listened to . . . ." (17). Even as late as the fifth century BCE., including the period of Plato's famous symposia, oral performance was traditional at private dinners and the like. Although some poems were transcribed to share with other small audiences, "[t]he act of composition is itself oral. The language is 'melic,' to use the correct ancient term. It is framed to be sung" (Havelock 18).

The analogy of Lyric as music, however, invites a perception of oral texts as subordinate to the melodies that "carried" them. This certainly would be a mistake, at least in the case of epic poetry, for example, where all of the elements of the ancient craft of

mousiké—word, song, and dance—conspired to foreground a mythos, a narrative depository of cultural values that existed apart from any single performer. The epic inculcates a tradition "displayed at a second 'diachronic level' of the memory; the song [text] is a 'feedback'" (Havelock 157).[4] Melody with dance accompaniment was intended primarily to aid in rendering mythos literally and figuratively memorable by exciting or energizing the soul. Werner Jaeger, for example, claims that the Greeks "considered that the only genuine forces which could form the soul were words and sounds [in tandem with] rhythm and harmony" (xxvii). Yet the oral text acted as a "first among equals" because of its logos, that is, its capacity to articulate tradition in terms of formal concepts. Melody and dance served as necessary supplements to verbal mnemonic devices: "Its [melody's] function so far as it was employed [was] to assist . . . in imprinting that syntax [of what was to be learned] on the memory by maximising the pleasure in reciting it" (Havelock 136).

Havelock speculates that what enabled melody to emerge and develop into independent form was the invention of alphabetic writing—a technology that allowed speakers to dispense with other mnemonic devices, including dance and melody (136).[5] Melody was free to exist in its own right as a form of expression, no longer under the constraint of concepts. Havelock describes the written form of the epic, for example, as mythos embedded in the very words and syllables of the text via "[p]honetic redundancy of diction, producing alliteration, anaphora, chiasmus, and the like . . ." (Havelock 157). Musical accompaniment assists in this recreative process, but it is the text that must serve as the "phenominalisation" (Havelock 157).[6] Here, however, Havelock has confused the

technology of the alphabetization, which makes possible the transmission of the text without accompaniment, with the audible effects as well as the rhythm of syntax, which creates its own inner music. Although it is true that rhetorical features become visible in writing, they are bound to the sound and order (rhythm) of the words of the text and not the alphabet. The question remains therefore concerning the relationship between syntactical structures and their audible effects and the lyrical nature of the text. In subsequent chapters, therefore, we will examine in the syntactical "music" that poetry generates. Since we know, however, that reading can be done in the absence of musical accompaniment, it is safe to say that the invention of an alphabet that could visibly represent both consonants and specific vowel sounds provided the context for a formal separation of melody produced by an instrument as accompaniment to the written text.

According to Havelock, ancient Greek Lyric, like epic and drama, was "an invention . . . designed for the functional purpose of a continuing record in oral cultures"—a complex of skills that together constitute a "mnemonic necessity" (186-7). Jaeger also contends that even though in early lyric poems this "record" appears to be expressed in terms more personal than in epic narrative, the context of live performance made the dialogue of the poem a public event: "It is true of Greek art as well as of Greek literature that until late in the fourth century it is principally the expression of the spirit of the community" (xxvii). Archilochus' sardonic observations about military life, for example, are often cited as an initial turn toward subjectivity, but according to Jaeger, such an interpretation would be anachronistic: "Nowadays we must find it difficult to imagine how entirely *public* was the conscience of a Greek. (In fact, the early Greeks

never conceived anything like the personal conscience of modern times.)" (9). Thus Archilochus' famous lyric about hastily abandoning his shield in the midst of battle in order to save himself is not so much an expression of personal history as it is a reflection of a contemporaneous shift in cultural values.[7] Havelock also observes, "Its [Lyric's] style and substance is 'other-oriented,' not in any abstract sense, but in the sense that the other is an audience, . . . often symbolized in the vocative as single person, but always felt as a listener who is a partner in the poetry" (20). It was not until private reading became widespread (after Plato) that poetry could become a thoroughly textual discourse (Havelock 9-10; 147-148). Once musical accompaniment was abandoned, however, it was as if words, despite their conceptual power, had lost a certain invocatory power, and so began a long and distinguished history of attempts to discover or recover the inherent melody that could still be "heard" in speech, until in the end one could argue that some poets, such as Mallarmé, achieved an inversion (never intended by the Greeks) that, in semiotic terms, made words serve as signifiers of a musical signified.

We can, in any case, imagine several evolutionary stages of poetic performance and writing during the periods of ancient and classical Greece. From approximately 700 to 500 BCE there would have been performances of lyric poems parallel to, but less public than, an epic performance, where melody and dance remained integral to a verbal text. During an intermediate period (approximately 500-400) writing became increasingly widespread, so that poems, although still perceived as a composite of melody and word, also were starting to be "heard" as words alone.[8] Finally, the craft of writing took over the mnemonic function of melody, which was then abandoned in favor of private reading

and composing. It might appear, then, that the Lyric at this stage was consigned wholly to the world of texts. Lyric would be defined subsequently not in terms of music, such as in Barnstone's phrase "a short poem that sings," but in terms of a linguistic system, that is, a short poem that signs. It is not self-evident, however, that the essence of Lyric can be wholly subsumed under the category of a linguistic artifact, and in subsequent chapters this definition will be challenged or at least modified. Our first step nevertheless is to explore the ways in which Lyric might be approached semiotically.

Michael Riffaterre and the Hypogram

In his *Semiotics of Poetry*, Michael Riffaterre attempts a semiosis of Lyric, taking it as a system of signs, the structure or pattern of which holds the key to its meaning. He begins with a structuralist presupposition that "the language of poetry differs from common linguistic usage," and he claims that readers grasp this difference "instinctively" (1-2). Jonathan Culler, for example, outlines this approach in his *Structuralist Poetics*: "[T]he primacy of formal patterning enables poetry to assimilate the meanings which words have in other instances of discourse and subject them to new organization" (163). The structuralist project is "to specify what is involved in these conventional expectations which make poetic language subject to a different teleology or finality from that of ordinary speech" (164). Culler thus sees poetry as serving an entirely different linguistic purpose ("teleology or finality") from that of ordinary language. In Riffaterre's semiotic application, learned textual conventions predispose readers to expect that when they encounter certain structural characteristics in a poem (signifiers), they will perform a shift in the relationship between these signifiers and their signifieds: "The literary

phenomenon . . . is a dialectic between text and reader" that is rule-governed (*Semiotics* 1). Although ordinary communication depends upon the capacity of words to refer, "that is, upon a direct relationship of words to things," the rules of the literature/reader dialectic dictate that when a reader encounters certain signals ("aberrants" or "ungrammaticalities") in the text that "threaten the literary representation of reality, or mimesis," the competent reader should expect a shift in signification (*Semiotics* 2). The syntactical patterns perceived by readers serve to make it clear that a particular unit of text is serving, in its signification, a difference purpose from that of simply referring to the world. He offers these lines of a poem by Paul Eluard as an example:

> De tout ce que j'ai dit de moi que reste-t-il
>
> J'ai conservé de faux trésors dans des armoires vides
>
> Of all I have said about myself, what is left? I have been keeping false treasures in empty wardrobes. (*Semiotics* 3)

Ungrammaticalities become apparent when, upon first reading, the reader attempts to make "false treasures" refer to or represent a literal object (mimesis) and then tries to make a false treasure exist in an "empty" wardrobe. Having recognized these anomalies, the reader then tries a shift in signifiers. In this example, Riffaterre suggests that the first line, "of all I have said about myself, what is left?" implies an obvious, if disheartening, answer: "nothing" (*Semiotics* 3). Having realized that the second line can not be interpreted straightforwardly, that is, in terms of ordinary language, the reader is in a position to make a shift in signification. The reader reads again, this time noticing that the second line's figures might be distilled into a "...periphrastic statement of disillusionment

(all these things amount to zero)," which means that the line is essentially a figurative variant of the key word 'nothing' that is already implied in line one (Fig. 1) (*Semiotics* 4).

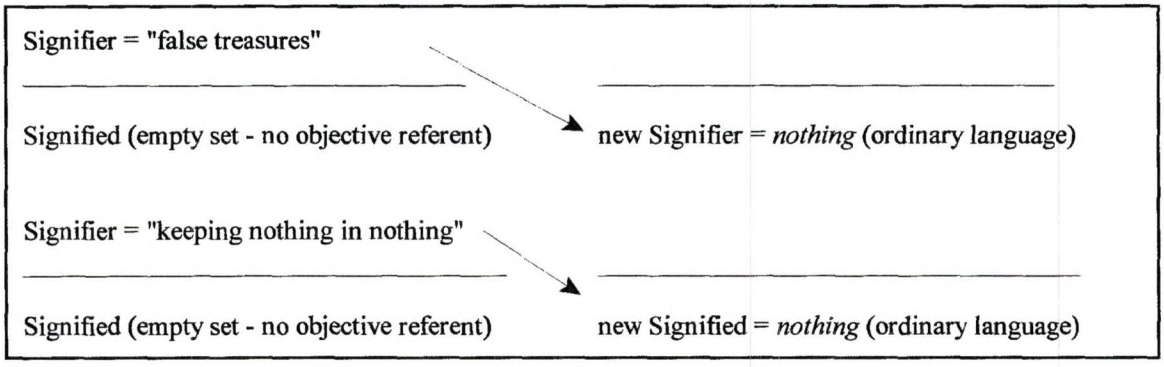

Figure 1. Riffaterre's analysis of a shift in signification made by the reader after recognizing ungrammicalities in the text.

Riffaterre calls the initial reading an "heuristic reading" in which meaning is sought according to "an assumption that language is referential—and at this stage words do indeed seem to relate first of all to things" (*Semiotics* 5). But when "incompatibilities" or ungrammaticalities occur, the reader is forced to do a "retroactive" reading—a second reading—which Riffaterre calls a "truly *hermeneutic* reading" (*Semiotics* 5). This second reading is a "structural decoding" of the text, which Riffaterre defines as the reader "working his way back to the structures that generate the text" (*Semiotics* 6, 168). Any key or kernel words discovered by this decoding process are "hypograms," which are related as signifiers, that is, they refer not to things but to a second-order set of verbal signifieds that can be described as a matrix or origin of all of the variant hypogrammic kernels and which can be, in turn, converted to an ordinary language sentence.[9]

It is here that Riffaterre parts company with an emotivist approach to poetry by presupposing that the ordinary, *referential* language of the matrix to which the poem's

text refers is unproblematic. Paul de Man, for example applauds Riffaterre's refusal to "valorize the irrational" ("Hypogram" 27). Riffaterre in fact displays a penchant for choosing texts that foreground a certain "morbidity," but he remains well within the realm of structural poetics, "of the Slavic as well as of the French variety" ("Hypogram" 27).[10] His semiosis of Lyric tries to show that while poetry does not mirror nature, it does, nevertheless, yield a reverse image of ordinary statements. Yet he does not go on to offer a philosophical argument about the relationship of ordinary language to reality. Linguists of a positivist bent had freed poets of any obligation to speak (or to be interpreted) in propositions that had any truth-value, but, according to structuralist critics who retained positivist assumptions about language, it did not render poems incomprehensible. They remain intelligible as exemplars of the way language works. Words *will* refer, if not to the world, then to each other. The poem as "verbal icon," illustrates an intuition of signification, but signification wholly linguistic and wholly semiotic. As a semiotician, Riffaterre simply advances the theory that Lyric can be understood as the signifying component of a self-referring intertext. The poem's significance, what it "signs," can be ascertained by ferreting out the poem's relationship to other texts, that is, by discovering how the poem as a unit is a textual signifier that, along with its textual signified (the hypogram) becomes the sign of a text that can be expressed in ordinary language (the matrix). Because the number of signifier/signified relationships in a text is finite, readers can achieve a reasonably certain and theoretically exhaustive understanding of the poem.[11]

Lyric, then, is defined by Riffaterre as a form of "scrambled transmission" or, to put it in traditionally rhetorical terms, periphrastic communication—a play of words that

engages the intellect without raising questions of how language refers to the world (*Semiotics* 165). But the dual problems of reference and meaning, mimesis and hermeneutics, are not thereby rendered irrelevant but merely displaced. The signifying poem may be intertextually overdetermined, that is, wholly comprehended within the boundaries of inter-related texts, yet the questions remain first, whether or not it can be reduced to, or translated into, ordinary language and second, whether or not ordinary language succeeds in referring to the world where poetic language fails, or indeed, whether poetry steps in where ordinary language already has failed. For example, in "Hypogram and Inscription," Paul de Man gently critiques what he regards as Riffaterre's otherwise lucid semiosis, suggesting that deciphering a poem by uncovering and specifying its matrix of ordinary language "kernels" reveals only another cipher. His point is that the ordinary language we use for communication and even the philosophical language we use for criticism already (and necessarily) has been, to use a perjorative term, infected by figures. Having admired Riffaterre's clarity of explication, de Man here suggests that lucidity, even in ordinary language, is unattainable.

De Man claims that the boundaries of logic and rhetoric always have been blurred, to the consternation of those philosophers who search for transparency in language.[12] Is it possible, then, that poems that at first glance may seem to be a playful, ciphered way of saying something very ordinary (for example, a cliché), or at the most, something traditionally regarded as wise (a saying or proverb) could play the more serious role of unpacking the meaning of what has, in ordinary language, become opaque to understanding? Poetizing would then becomes a function of thought—a creation of fresh

metaphor that either truly awakens understanding or, from de Man's point of view, merely poses as a new insight. From this perspective the "play" has become a game of deception. As he famously puts it in the title to his collection of essays on the rhetoric of criticism, the reader of literature inevitably exhibits a corresponding "blindness" in achieving any "insight."

The Roots of Western Lyric

Since ancient and classical Greek Lyric is one of English Lyric's major roots, it would seem natural to pursue the answers to these questions about the semiosis of Lyric in that context. The dearth of complete poems from the period, however, remains a major barrier to comparative studies. As Richard Lattimore laments, the greatest of these lyrics have three things in common: they are from the same period, they are short, and they are mostly destroyed (v). Granted, however, an expansion of the strictest taxonomy, which would restrict the genre of Lyric to monody accompanied by the lyre, to include more abundant extant forms of elegy (especially the epigram) we can perhaps gain sufficient access to the form during the period of its Greek origins to apply to it Riffaterre's semiotic method.

At first glance, it would seem sufficient simply to distinguish between lyric poems and the dramatic and epic poetry of ancient and classical Greece. According to J. W. Mackail, however, the Greeks themselves made additional distinctions that reflect an evolution of lyrical forms. Deriving from Homeric meters and diction, the elegaic couplet emerged first. The iambus, for which Archilochus (680-640 BCE) became famous, then broke with these formal structures and introduced more "restless" rhythms and meters

couched in a kind of street language. Lastly, the melic developed from the iambus into a form especially associated with music, employing many meters in a combination of dactylic and trochaic rhythms. The closest of the forms to prose, it also found its way into the language of the theater. These solo performances of poetry with lyre accompaniment (monody) developed in Ionia in the seventh century BCE, and especially flourished 650-500 BCE, a period which, according to Mackail, could be compared to Tudor England, when medieval social structures were superseded by monarchy and a semblance of later democracy (*Lectures* 84-86). According to Bowra, the poems of Sappho, Alcaeus, and Anacreon probably were composed for the edification of friends in secular settings (5, 13). In Mackail's estimation, monody reached its height after the Persian wars in the poems of Simonides (*Lectures* 133).

The seven-stringed lyre used for accompanying monody may have been invented as early as the Mycenean period, but Archilochus is the first to mention it (Bowra 2-3). There would have been no harmony in the accompaniment; there was simply a tune, which in turn set the meter for the poem. Since the tunes are lost, it is difficult to discriminate among the multitude of meters to which they were conjoined, but it is likely, according to Bowra, that a triad of strophe/antistrope/epode (in which the strophe-antistrophe carried the same meter, then varied in the epode) was common (10, 11). This marriage of melody, meter, and words can still be appreciated even though only the words are left: "[E]ven in their divorced state the words have an astonishingly melodious movement of their own, and this certainly owes much to the demands of the accompaniment" (Bowra 10). As early as the second century CE, in his *On Literary Composition*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for

example, praises Sappho's "polished and exuberant style" and observes, "The euphony and charm of this passage [referring to an invocation of Aphrodite] lie in the cohesion and smoothness of the joinery. Words are juxtaposed and interwoven according to certain natural affinities and groupings of the letters. . . " (qtd. in Campbell 53).[13]

According to H. J. Rose, the early elegaic couplet employed two halves of the Homeric hexameter, which totaled five feet: – ˘ ˘ – ˘ ˘ – ; – ˘ ˘ – ˘ ˘ – .[14] It probably was sung, but the tunes were associated with music of the flute or oboe that originated in cultures to the east of Ionia (80-81). After the Greek alphabet was invented, it evolved from its oral form into the written form of *epigram*, a term first attested in Herodotus and an exact equivalent of Latin *inscriptio* and English *inscription* (Mackail, *Select Epigrams* 1). Since Martial, the epigram has most often been understood as a short, witty poem that makes a whimsical or moral point, but in its first use in ancient Greece, it denoted simply words engraved in verse upon a stone, tablet, or sepulcher. Its original formal limit of a single couplet evolved to include up to four couplets, with occasional longer exceptions to the rule. In addition, the descriptor *elegiac* did not correspond to what became known as the *tristis elegeia* mode of the Latin poets; rather, it was used to describe everything from simple memorials to war chants and political commentary. Mackail observes that over the course of its early history, the elegaic epigram evolved into "a vehicle so facile and flexible that it never seems unsuitable or inadequate" to any occasion or use (*Select Epigrams* 6). Its consistent meter was sufficient to distinguish it both from the epic hexameter and the melic modes, but very often its affinity to what we have come to know as the Lyric in English is self-evident. Compare, for example, this seduction poem by

Asclepiades to Andrew Marvel's "To His Coy Mistress":

φείδῃ παρθένίης, καὶ τί πλέον ; οὐ γὰρ ἐς Ἀιδην

ἐλθοῦσ' εὑρήσεις τὸν φιλέοντα, κόρη·

Ἐν ζωοῖσι τὰ τερπνά τὰ Κύπριδος· ἐν δ'' Αχέροντι

ὀστέα καὶ σποδιή, παρθένε, κεισόμεθα. (9.8)[15]

Maiden, you prize your maidenhead, but what does it profit you? When you arrive in Hades, chaste girl, you will find no lover. The Cyprian's delights are among the living; having crossed Acheron, O virgin, we shall lie still—dust and ashes.

In fact, as Mackail notes, fragments of long lyric poems (as well as other forms of poetry) sometimes were included in the *Greek Anthology* because, in their unfortunately fragmented form, they could be read as epigrams:

> . . . and the epigram in Greek, while it always remained conditioned by being in its essence and origin an inscriptional poem, took in the later periods so wide a range of subject and treatment that it can perhaps only be limited by certain abstract conventions of length and metre. Sometimes it becomes in all but metrical form a lyric; . . . . (*Select Epigrams* 3)

Discerning the Hypogram of the Epigram

Riffaterre defined a lyrical poem's hypogram as the signified of the linguistic matrix out of which the poem arose. This matrix may, in the end, be an artifact of the sociolect (for example, a cliché, pun, or proverb) or a philosopheme, both of which ultimately can be stated in ordinary language. The poem as a whole signifies that matrix

and nothing else. This means that poems are not mimetic, that is, they do not directly refer to the empirical world in terms of re-presenting it to the reader (*Semiotics* 12-13). Rather, every poem presents to the reader features that make it recognizable as a literary artificact. Ungrammaticalities, for example, force the reader to do a second, hermeneutical reading, the object of which is to find out in what other system these ungrammaticalities become grammatical. The greater the ungrammaticality, the more constrained the reader is to find a specific intra-textual or inter-textual referent. There are a finite number of referents, even though the more complex the poem, the more referents there may be and the less likely it is that the reader can discover them in one reading (*Semiotics* 164-166).

In Asclepiades' epigram, for example, an initial reading suggests a mise en scène; however, it becomes evident that the epigram is an artifact (that it does not "re-present" anything) when we encounter an ungrammaticality, which is the absurdity of the lover's rationale for a consummation—"οὐ γὰρ ἐσ″Αιδην ἐλθοῦσ' εὑρήσεις τὸν φιλέοντα, κόρη·." This is a reference to stock clichés about the brevity of life, as well as any number of other epigrams lamenting the shortness of life and the loneliness of death, that function as the matrix or ultimate source of the poem's text.[16] A second reading therefore performs a shift that places the lover's apparent skepticism about the virtue of virginity in the context of a joke addressed not to a female lover but a (probably) male reader. Duly amused, the reader is likely to read again, however, recognizing that the writer has structured the epigram in a way that dispenses almost immediately with its initial cavalier attitude toward the subject of seduction and reiterates instead in each of the subsequent clauses a reference to the more serious hypogram. Finally, it reads as an elegy,

which Mackail, in his own arrangement of selections from the *Anthology*, appropriately places in the section entitled "Fate and Change" rather than "The Human Comedy," or "Love."[17]

In his own work on semiotics, Culler commends Riffaterre for contributing to the structuralist project a powerful and ingenious semiotic method of discerning poetic structures. He defends Riffaterre against a common complaint—that Riffaterre "violates critical decorum in claiming that reading a poem is a matter of discovering the word or sentence from which it is generated of which its every element is a variant" (*Pursuit* 91)—by noting that Riffaterre explicitly states in *Semiotics of Poetry* that the meaning of a poem is not "deducible from a comparison between variants of the given, and it would be a reductionist procedure" (12). The poem's significance is, "rather, the reader's praxis of the transformation, a realization that it is akin to playing, to acting out the liturgy of a ritual . . ."(12). This defense seems to be based on the notion that reading is a performance that never yields a stable meaning. Culler argues that structuralism seeks to discover the conditions of the possibility of various interpretations of the text, but it does not seek to perform those interpretations or discover new ones; the structuralist enterprise is not hermeneutical. Semiotics is valuable as an instrument used to "identify effects of signification . . . . Then one can attempt to construct models of signifying processes to account for these effects" (48). Yet he admits that if a competent reader will be led ineluctably by the poem's markers to a definite matrix, this "solution to the puzzle" effectively cancels out other interpretations (98). Despite his initial defense, then, Culler ends by chastising Riffaterre for falling prey to the temptation to do hermeneutics—to

offer interpretations superior to and more subtle than any offered thus far. Riffaterre tends to muddy the semiotic waters: "It is difficult to treat the efforts of previous readers simultaneously as the phenomena one wishes to explain and as the errors one is attempting to surpass" (94).[18]

In his 1981 paper "Hypogram and Inscription," Paul de Man, too, praises Riffaterre for discovering a powerful and productive methodology. He calls Riffaterre's approach "probably the most reliable didactic model for the teaching of literature . . . available at the present" (28). De Man also notes, however, that Riffaterre seems to conflate structuralism and hermeneutics. While Riffaterre accepts without reservation the traditional assumption that formalism entails description but not "understanding," he is at the same time "compelled to integrate the hermeneutic activity of the reader within his enterprise" ("Hypogram" 30-31). For de Man, then, Riffaterre becomes "a model case for examining if and how the poetics of literary form can be made compatible with the hermeneutics of reading" ("Hypogram" 31).

In the end, however, de Man's critique of Riffaterre has less to do with keeping open the prospect of producing a multitude of interpretations than it has to do with the possibility of making an interpretation, which in turn resolves into a problem of language. De Man points out that Riffaterre, in the last chapter of *Semiotics of Poetry*, does acknowledge that even after careful decoding, hermeneutics is a "chancy" business and "interpretation is never final" (Riffaterre 165). But de Man suspects that in the hermeneutical difficulties lie problems more intractable than those involved in accurately solving a verbal puzzle. He suggests that reading is vexed by a problem inherent to the

relationship between rhetoric and grammar, and that this is a problem that emerges in the very notions of the hypogram and matrix. It is this hesitation to affirm the strict separation of literary and non-literary language that marks a transition between structuralist and post-structuralist theory.

De Man argues that, traditionally, the stability of the relationship between quadrivium and trivium depended on the assumption that logic served as the link between the sciences and grammar, which then served to articulate in language the findings of science ("Resistance" 102-3). Rhetoric retained a dignified but subordinate position; it functioned as an ornament that enhanced the affect, or affective effect, of language. Structuralists inherited this presumption of a strict separation between logic/grammar and rhetoric and carried on a "reduction of figure to grammar" ("Semiology" 907-8). De Man claims, however, that "the grammatical decoding of a text leaves a residue of indetermination that has to be, but cannot be, resolved by grammatical means, however extensively conceived" ("Resistance" 104). He speculates that critical readings are destined to oscillate forever between mounting an explanation of the text in grammatical-logical terms and recognizing that its final content has not, alas, been comprehended fully because its figures resist translation ("Resistance" 104-105; "Semiology" 906).

Responding, for example, to Riffaterre's reading of Victor Hugo's poem "Ecrit sur la vitre d'une fenetre flamande," de Man first agrees with Riffaterre that the poem certainly is not mimetic, that is, it does not purport to describe the actual sound of a carillon, but refers to certain figures that had their origin in other literary exempla that can be traced as soon as a reader recognizes the pertinent ungrammaticalities, such as the dancer who

enters through a door of air. But de Man also wondered whether or not "inscribed" within the hypogram that Riffaterre had discovered (*carillon flamande*) there was yet another metaphor—a figure for the cognition or consciousness of the passage of time.

"Ecrit sur la vitre d'une fenetre flamande"

J'aime le carillon de tes cités antiques,
O vieux pays gardien de tes mœurs domestiques,
Noble Flandre, où le Nord se réchauffe engourdi
Au soleil de Castille et s'accouple au Midi!
Le carillon, c'est l'heure inattendue et folle,
Que l'œil croit voir, vêtue en danseuse espagnole,
Apparaître soudain par le trou vif et clair
Que ferait en s'ouvrant une porte de l'air.
Elle vient, secouant sur les toits léthargiques
Son tablier d'argent plein de notes magiques,
Réveillant sans pitié les dormeurs ennuyeux,
Sautant à petits pas comme un oiseau joyeux,
Vibrant, ainsi qu'un dard qui tremble dans la cible;
Par un fréle escalier de cristal invisible,
Effarée et dansante, elle descend des cieux;
Et l'esprit, ce veilleur fait d'oreilles et d'yeux,
Tandis qu'elle va, vient, monte et descend encore,
Entend de marche en marche errer son pied sonore!

> I love the carillon of your ancient towns, o old land, keeper of your domestic customs. O noble Flanders, where the benumbed North warms itself in the sun of Castille and mates with the South! The carillon is the unexpected and mad hour the eye thinks it sees, dressed as a Spanish dancer, appearing suddenly through the keen, bright hole made by a door of air as it opens. She comes, shaking over the lethargic rooftops her silver apron, full of magical notes, pitilessly waking the wearisome sleepers, taking little jumps, like a merry bird, quivering like a spear trembling in its target. By a fragile stairway of invisible crystal, alarmed and dancing, she descends from the heavens. And as she goes and comes and climbs up and down again, the mind, that watchman made of ears and eyes, hears her resonant foot wandering from step to step. (trans. Riffaterre, "Prosopopeia" 109)

De Man argues, against Riffaterre, that the matrix of this poem is articulated most accurately as "j'aime le carillon," which is a figure of speech that could be expressed in a sentence that describes the relationship of the mind to time (Fig. 2) ("Hypogram" 32).

Under this model, various signifiers of the carillon are displaced to a new verbal signified—"time," and the "love" that first refers to the poetic construct of the "I" but is displaced to "mind" or consciousness. These verbal signifieds reveal an underlying matrix that hypothesizes a relationship between subject (I) and object (time). But both time and mind are invisible; they can only be "seen," according to de Man, by virtue of a kind of hallucination induced by a figure of speech. It is "the claim of all poetry to make the

invisible visible," and it is just this invocatory power that puts the distinction between (stable) sign and (unstable) trope in question ("Hypogram" 34). It is not certain whether it is the sign that makes metaphor possible or metaphor that is the condition of the possibility of the sign. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, the latter alternative significantly broadens the role of metaphor in cognition.

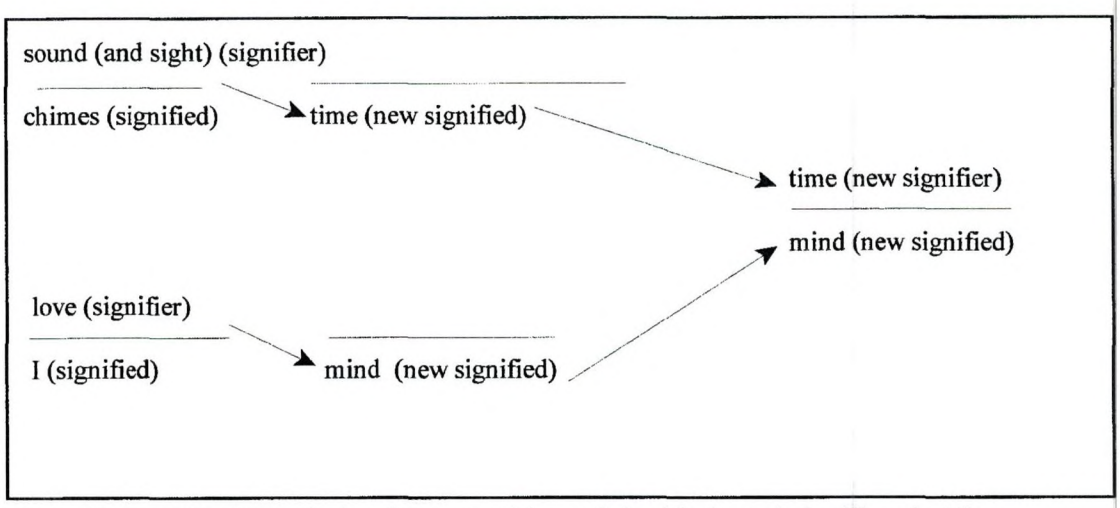

Figure 2. De Man's analysis of the transition of signifieds and signifiers in Victor Hugo's "*Ecrit sur la vitre d'une fenetre flamande*."

Furthermore, de Man observes, the title of the poem, "*Écrit sur la vitre d'une fenetre flamande*," clearly indicates a material inscription that constrains the reader to read the poem under the aegis of a material reference, namely, the author of the poem ("Hypogram" 35). The fantastic crystal stairway that stages the dancing figure of the Hour is solidly paralleled in the glass pane, which only the hardest of substances is able to engrave, but which becomes visible to the eye only when it is willfully (implying an intentional subject) stained by inscription. Thus the material subject of the poem is

inscribed within its own creation, memorializing its consciousness in a manner that time, in the fleeting sound of the carillon, never can.

De Man's critique brings us full circle to the presupposition with which Riffaterre began his semiotic project, namely, that there is a clear distinction between so-called ordinary and literary language. If the poem, on first reading, is a confusion of contradictions, discovering the hypogram/matrix will yield, at the least, a figure or trope, an inter-textual connection that can be converted to ordinary language (Fig. 3).

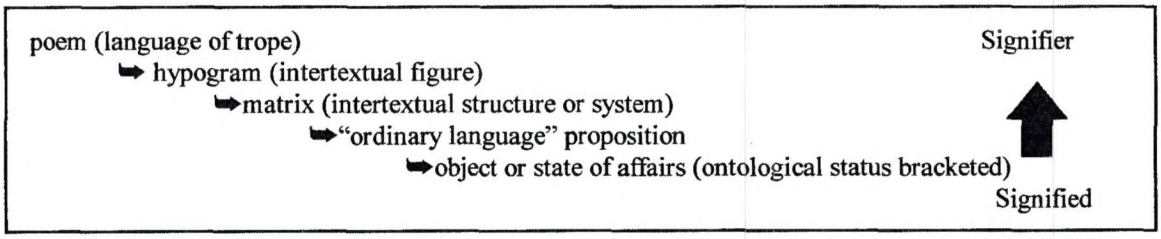

Figure 3. Riffaterre's hierarchy of signifying relationships.

When Riffaterre observes, "The text functions something like a neurosis," that is, repression precipitates its own expression under a variety of initially cryptic forms, he is transposing to poetry what had become a commonplace among philosophers who hoped that an analysis of language might solve some of the more intransigent philosophical riddles, especially in the realm of metaphysical and religious propositions (*Semiotics* 19). De Man warns, however, that when the conversion of the matrix results in a philosopheme such as the relationship between time and mind, or even in a cliché such as "time heals all wounds," the reduction of poetry to ordinary language becomes problematic, even if the critic wishes not to enter into that particular philosophical fray, because it raises the

question of whether or not ordinary language is any more transparent to the understanding than the so-called periphrasis of the poem ("Hypogram" 27).

In a reply to de Man's critique, Riffaterre does admit that de Man's reading of "Écrit" altered his perspective. Recalling Kant's famous comment that David Hume had awakened him from his epistemological "dogmatic slumbers," Riffaterre observes, "I rested happily on my conclusions, sure that I had covered all angles, until Paul de Man jolted me out of my complacency" ("Prosopopeia" 108). Unlike Kant, however, he was not convinced that a critical Copernican revolution was in order. He concedes only that de Man had shown that Hugo's poem involved a "figure of a figure," namely that the figural description of the carillon (metaphor and thing) is itself subordinated to an association between two figures that are ultimately organized into a new sign "where mind is the signifier and time the signified" (Riffaterre, "Prosopopeia" 110). This new sign can be comprehended, however, under the traditional rhetorical category of prosopopeia, which Riffaterre then proposes, in agreement with de Man, as one of the essential characteristics of Lyric.

Following Pierre Fontanier's taxonomy of rhetorical terms (published in 1821), Riffaterre defines prosopopeia as the rhetorical device of "staging, as it were, absent, dead, supernatural or even inanimate beings" who are then made to "act, speak, answer as is our wont" (qtd. in "Prosopopeia" 107). He uses the terms *supposition* and *hypothesis* to explain how the poem's author proposes to the reader a "natural impossibility" ("Prosopopeia" 110). In the case of Hugo's poem, the first level of "staging" is a prosopopeia of the Hour, signified by the sounding carillon that is personified in the

Spanish dancer on a crystal stairway.[19] For Riffaterre, this is a simple illustration of the principle that poems do not refer to the world but to "familiar [verbal] stereotypes." He grants nonetheless that he had ignored a second level of "staging" in the poem that, in its turn, makes visible or gives face to what he now recognizes as the essence of the poet's art—prosopopeia, reflected in the etymology of the term itself: *προσόπον πόειν* ("Prosopopeia" 108). The opening address of the poet to the land, "I love the carillon of your ancient towns," Riffaterre acknowledges, "must slant uniformly all its [the poem's] subsequent functions" ("Prosopopeia" 108). It is this apostrophe that effectively "proposes a new sign for 'consciousness of time,'" and through which is revealed a "prosopopeia of prosopopeia." The reader now "sees" the figure of a figure, namely, the cognition of Time "figured in" the dancing Hour, who/which (the Hour and its "human face"—the dancer—are now identical) is a figure of the ringing of the carillon.

In addition, it is this meta-staging that reveals both the inscription of the author's self in the poem and necessarily a return to a material reference: "Inscription, as he [de Man] points out, refers to the real. Even the most unreal play of postulates presupposes a subject . . . ." ("Prosopopeia" 111). The very title of the poem, "Inscribed on a Flemish Window," refers to this material subject. Riffaterre observes, in fact, that "this persona cannot therefore be distinguished from the author (this being the one instance [sic] in literature where the intentional fallacy does not apply); consequently, any metonymic or synecdochic periphrasis substituted for the subject (like the title in Hugo's poem) is *the inscription of the self in the text—the very definition of the lyric*" (emphasis added) ("Prosopopeia" 111).

The distinctive nature of the Lyric, Riffaterre concludes, must be inextricably linked to "the I-Thou relationship [of the poet] to the universe," an association that ineluctably surfaces in the text. At this juncture Riffaterre also acknowledges a second "insight" offered by de Man, which is that apostrophe presupposes the possibility of dialogue: "the address calls for a reply of the addressee, the gaze that perceives animation invites gazing back from the animated object to the subject daydreaming a Narcissistic reflection of itself in things" ("Prosopopeia" 112). Earlier in the same essay, Riffaterre had been careful to emphasize Fontanier's distinction between prosopopeia, apostrophe, and dialogism (107-108), but in this concession, a conflation of apostrophe and dialogue return here as the very "structure" of prosopopeia, which he further subsumes under the rubric of chiasmus, defined as "the transfer or crisscrossing exchange between subject and object . . . ." ("Prosopopeia" 112). Finally, Riffaterre proposes an intertext that, once and for all, "fuses" the window's material inscription (subject) with the dancing Hour (object)—a famous graffiti etched on a window at the royal Chateau Chambord: "Woman often changes. Foolish he who trusts her" (qtd. in "Prosopopeia" 112). The mutability of time, the supposed fickleness of Woman (now transposed into the dancing woman of the Hour), the fragility of glass (and thus the risk implicit in inscription), and love are inextricably patterned and overdetermined by the poem's title ("Prosopopeia" 112-13).

Riffaterre eventually uses this doubled-image essence of Lyric (apostrophe and reply) as the foundation for his larger proposal, which cannot be taken up here, that Lyric is capable of generating narrative (116-123). First, however, he makes a key observation for the study of Greek lyrics: Chiasmus, that necessary corollary of prosopopeia, is

demonstrated most transparently, he argues, in the epitaph. He cites de Man's example of Milton's epitaph on Shakespeare, in which Milton laments that he and all other writers are themselves turned into stone—struck dumb—in the very midst of inscribing a memorial to the great playwright: ". . . thou our fancy of itself bereaving/Dost make us Marble with too much conceiving." This apostrophe generates a dialogue in which a "dumb" object takes up the address and in reply, speaks the subject into its own image: "prosopopeia thus stakes out a figural space for the chiasmic interpretation: either the subject will take over the object, or it will be penetrated by the object" ("Prosopopeia" 112).

Inscribing the Epigram

In the case of the ancient and classical Greek sepulchral epigrams collected in the *Greek Anthology*, the context, like Milton's monument to Shakespeare, is memorial. This context alerts readers to a cultural ritual and enables them to respond to the texts appropriately, that is, not to expect to receive information about states of affairs but to perform a ritual dialogue: "[A] constant component of poetic significance is that the poem's language looks as much like a ritual or a game . . . as it does like a means of conveying sense" (*Semiotics* 164). Thus the condition of the possibility of understanding an epigram, whether literally inscribed on a monument or later written as text, is that it is already literary when readers come to it, predisposing them to understand the inscription as a unit of signifying text. This poignant epigram, for example, is representative of a large class of epigrams dedicated to those who perished at sea:

Καὶ σέ Κλεηνορίδη, πόθος ὤλεσε πατρίδος σ αἴης

θαρσήσαντα Νότου λαίλαπι χειμερίῃ·

Ὥρη γάρ σε πέδησεν ἀνέγγυος· ὑγρὰ δὲ τὴν σὴν

κύματ᾽ ἀφ᾽ ἱμερτὴν ἔκλυσεν ἡλικίην. (11.33)

And son of Cleanor, desire for your homeland utterly destroyed you–

for trusting to the South's wintry wind, the unfettered season fettered you,

and the surging wet waves washed away your lovely youth.

This epigram is a direct "staging," to use Fontanier's term, of an absent or dead being. The encounter is a "mock hypothesis" ("Prosopopeia" 108). The youth, like an actor in a Greek drama, wears a mask that makes visible the otherwise faceless dead. Once the reader accedes to the hypothesis, the drama unfolds as an invocation and response. What appears on first reading to be a monologue addressed to a dead person becomes a dialogue between "I" (the poet, who is the one and only subject inscribed in the memorial) and "Thou"–the "calling back" of consciousness. In this case, the figure of destroyed youth is the figure for a simple but ancient sentiment: "There's no place like home." It only remains for the reader to work out the periphrasis, that "place" where the figure makes play with the hypogram ("Prosopopeia" 112).

CHAPTER III

GENERATING TEXT: MATRIX AND LOGOS IN RIFFATERRE, KRISTEVA, AND MARITAIN

Ὅπλισμαι πρὸς Ἔρωτα περὶ στέρνοισι λογισμόν. . . .

Girded with the breastplate of reason, I am armed against Love . . . . — Rufinus

Michael Riffaterre proposes that the "I-Thou" relationship, traditionally catalogued as prosopopeia, is "*the* lyric figure," and he concedes, in response to Paul De Man's critique, that every lyric bears witness to material inscription. "Inscription, as he [De Man] points out, refers to the real" ("Prosopopeia" 111). Both critics use the words *material* and *real* in their ordinary sense of something physical and sensible. They therefore agree that, writing, even though it is governed by linguistic codes, necessarily entails an inscriber who is (or at least has) a body existing in the world of space and time and that the inscription itself can be described as a physical object. His own semiotic project, however, is focused upon discovering the structure of the dialogue between reader and text, in which the subjective experience and ontological status of the subject-author (as well as the reader) is bracketed. Using this astringent method, Riffaterre hopes to offer a solution to the puzzle of how an apparently idiosyncratic subset of language works within a larger linguistic system; to precisely describe the linguistic province of lyrical speech is to define it since, by definition, to define is to set the boundaries or limits of something. De Man, however, continues to doubt that the "ghost of referentiality, which has theoretically been

exorcised in the model of the hypogram," is truly gone, speculating that when Riffaterre characterizes reading as "an undecisiveness [sic] resolved at one moment and lost the next" he is acknowledging that something exceeds the method (*Semiotics* 29-30). In this chapter I examine Riffaterre's method in the context of his theory of text production. I then suggest that for both Julia Kristeva (b. 1941), whose work in literary theory, grounded in her background in Marxist theory and Freudian/Lacanian psychoanalysis, spans the periods of structuralism and post-structuralism, and Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), a Thomist whose philosophy of aesthetics predates structuralism, there is a corporeal "plus," signifying the original intuition of experience between subject and object, which is communicated through, yet in spite of, language.

In her 1975 essay "From One Identity to An Other," for example, Kristeva notes that even in the case of so-called ordinary communication, and despite powerful constructionist critiques of the notion of a discreet ego, linguists still confront the problem of the "communicable sentence between speakers," which seems to presuppose a Cartesian notion of the autonomous self (*Desire* 131). She does not argue, however, that there is nothing that "exceeds the operating consciousness"; in fact, it is this "excess" that Kristeva explores in her various analyses of poetic language and the semiotics of the body. According to Kristeva, poetic language, which she extrapolates to include literary language in general, has manifested a sea-change dating from Mallarmé (*Revolution* 82-3).[20] But she also contends that this diachronic "revolution" is always present synchronically along the borders of the symbolic and semiotic in the body. The trespasses of the semiotic upon the symbolic therefore are apparent in any literature, ancient or

modern (*Revolution* 15).[21] Unlike Riffaterre, however, Kristeva locates the semiotic not in language or other public systems of signification, but in the body itself. The semiotic is a pre-authorial and pre-linguistic matrix of bodily impulses and rhythms generating the process of self-formation only later recognized in language (*Revolution* 36).

Maritain and Kristeva ultimately differ in their metaphysics.[22] Like Kristeva, however, Maritain describes in his works on creativity a preconscious matrix of drives, emotion, and will that is pre-linguistic and incarnated, that is, of the body, and which generates something not yet expressible yet destined to be expressed. He also shares with Kristeva a profound aversion to Cartesian rationalism as well as an affinity for Aristotelian materialism, and he precedes her in identifying a revolution in poetic language (although he chooses Baudelaire rather than Mallarmé as its pioneer) and in adopting a Freudian standpoint toward consciousness (262, 91).

Riffaterre's Theory of Textual Production

According to Riffaterre, the space and expression of the hypogram are generated in the recursive processes (expansion and conversion) that establish a semantic equivalence between the kernel word or matrix sentence (a lexeme that is "always rewritable") and its syntagm, which is ensconced in the poem (47). Expansion "transforms

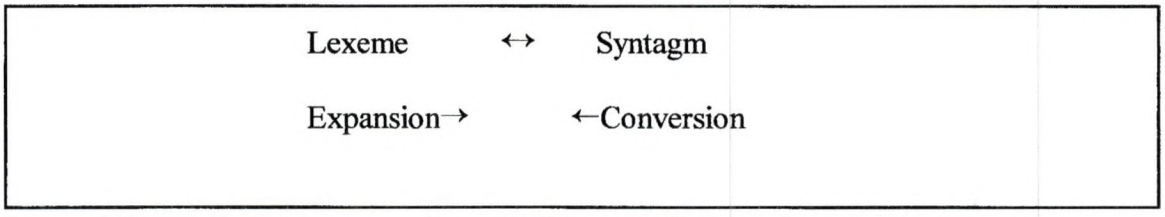

Figure 4. Expansion and contraction establish an equivalency between lexeme and syntagm.

one sign into several"; conversion transforms "several signs into one 'collective' sign" (47) (Fig. 4).

Expansion is "the chief agent" in generating "textual signs," which Riffaterre defines as "signs that stand for a whole text" that are already well-known or "easy for him [the reader] to reconstruct" and is "therefore the principal generator of significance, since a constant can be spotted only where the text spreads out into successive variants of its initial given, the more complex issuing from the simpler" (47, 174). It *"transforms the constituents of the matrix sentence into more complex forms"* (48). Thus the reader reads the periphrasis of the poem as a whole by gradually reconstructing the matrix of the expanded sequence, which is "the text imagined by him [the reader] in its pretransformation state" and may comprise one or several sentences, a cliché, a quotation, or a "descriptive system" (63).

The text of the "son of Cleanor" epigram , for example, might be read as a reference to cultural idiolects about the close relationship between death and desire. Within the space of its apostrophe, the poem develops an equivalence between the two concepts announced in the first line by transforming πόθοσ "yearning for something absent" into ὤλεσε "destruction."

> Καὶ σέ Κλεηνορίδη, πόθος ὤλεσε πατρίδος αἴης
>
> And you, too, son of Cleanor, desire for your homeland utterly destroyed you—

Lines two and three then complicate this doomed relationship by recalling the ancient ties between intemperate trust (θαρσέω) and its all-too-frequent outcome in deceit, that is,

being tripped-up or caught in a bind (πεδάω).

θαρσήσαντα Νότου λαίλαπι χειμερίῃ·

Ὥρη γάρ σε πέδησεν ἀνέγγυος· ὑγρὰ δὲ τὴν σὴν

for trusting to the South's wintry wind,

the unfettered season fettered you,

These terms serve as an interpretive node leading to the periphrasis of the final line: vulnerability to deceit is the fruit of desire, and the outcome of deceit is destruction.

κύματ' ἀφ' ἱμερτὴν ἔκλυσεν ἡλικίην.

and the surging wet waves washed away your lovely youth.

Sea-billows "wash away" the lovely youth (figuratively and literally), establishing the equivalence of desire, deceit, and destruction. In the end, drowning accomplishes both a baptismal release from the fetters of deceit and a dissolving of the bonds of life "ἐκλύω"—only to be replaced by the bonds of death.

A hypogram's reconstruction, therefore, is essentially a conversion process that subsumes the text's syntagms under a single signified. This reconstruction, Riffaterre also notes, possesses a negative "pejorative" or positive "meliorative" charge that is mirrored in the expansion/production of the text: "This means that the significance will be a positive valorization of the textual semiotic unit if the hypogram is negative, and a negative valorization if the hypogram is positive" (63-64). This linguistic charge applies a common radical or marker to the sequences generated by expansion, and it is this semiotic role that the symbol plays: "[I]ndividual meanings of words are subordinated to a single overriding symbolism, *and the symbolism is the opposite of the hypogram's connotations*" (emphasis

added) (65). For example, in the following anonymous epigram, the hypogram is expanded in the text into a positive valorization of its opposite on counts both of life/death and the trick of memory that make an impossibility "possible."

Τοῦτό τοι ἡμετέρης μνημήϊον, ἐσθλὲ Σαβῖνε,

ἡ λίθος ἡ μικρὴ τῆς μεγάλης φιλίης·

Αἰεὶ ζητήσω σέ· σὺ δ', εἰ θέμις ἐν φθιμένοισιν,

τοῦ Λήθης ἐπ' ἐμοὶ μή τι πίῃς ὕδατος (3.64)

This little stone, good Sabinus, is a memorial of our great friendship.

I will always miss you; and if with the dead

you must drink of the waters of Lethe,

drink not forgetfulness of me.

The "time must have a stop" of death is marked in the poem by an opposing radical, which is the hope that memory can overcome it—even a command that it do so.[23] What is implicitly denied in the physical inscription is explicitly affirmed in the text of the inscription. The diminutive *little* and its antonym *great* conjoin to restore to life the warmth and intimacy of friendship, and they are followed by an *"amplificatio,"* the "simplest form" of expansion, in which repetitive sequences accumulate to create a single effect (49). In this series of amplifications the possibility of eternal remembrance is repeatedly posited by a negation of the pejorative connotation of the hypogram. Ultimately, and given the magnitude of what the memorial attempts to achieve, the maximum must be supposed: a conversion of the waters of Lethe from the waters of death to the waters of life, so that forgetfulness itself becomes a memorial to memory, and a

stone monument becomes a watery memorial. Like Hugo's inscription on glass (Chapter One), the epigram is marked by the subject's consciousness of vulnerability. The inscription is the last trace of "the 'here' and the 'now,'" as de Man puts it ("Hypogram" 32).

The same conversion of pejorative hypogram to meliorative text is evident in Plato's "Morning Star" epigram.

> ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν Ἑῷος,
>
> νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις Ἔσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις. (11.53)
>
> Once you shone, the Morning Star, among the living,
>
> now in death you shine, the Evening Star, among the dead.

This epigram places in dramatic parallelism the relative functions of the morning and evening stars, resulting in a parallax—a shift in position relative to the eye of the beholder, the subject who writes the epitaph. In the initial encomium the poet posits a dialogue that effects a denial of death—a meliorative, reverse image of the matrix sentence, "All must go down to the darkness of Hades," so that the deceased is still alive though among the dead, still shining, and still a star. The present tense of the second line makes explicit this proposal to undo death.

Percy Bysshe Shelley translated this epigram into English to use on the title page of *Adonais*, his elegy on the untimely death of John Keats. His rendering of the epigram as a quatrain intensifies dramatically, via the amplification that additional lines afford, the symbolism of immortality:

. . . . . To Stella

Thou wert the morning star among the living,

Ere thy fair light had fled;—

Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving

New splendour to the dead.

Shelley's second line, which is not part of the original, is a gloss on the first. The morning star traditionally symbolizes hope and new life; *fair* adds soft, appealing beauty to the star's reliquary of icons, and *fled* connotes an intimate relationship with someone who, suddenly discovered, departs unwillingly, in haste, and perhaps even blushingly—as a comely youth might hasten from a bedchamber. Enhancing the implications of the present tense, Shelley's last line expands λάμπεις to connote both *new*, which affirms the divine power of Hesperus to revivify "the dead" each day by reinstating a role as morning's herald, and *splendid*, which enhances the delicate beauty connoted by *fair* to an effulgent brightness.[24] Most powerful because of its absurdity, then, is the hypothesis that this lovely soul will achieve a general resurrection of the dead.

Syntagm as Metalanguage

This analysis of the relationship between lexeme and syntagm inevitably involves a hierarchy of language. In his discussion of humorous poetry, for example, Riffaterre comments that the linguistic fun of humor amounts to "a means of testing new semantic and semiotic relationships," which leads to him to speculate that "poetic language is a special case of metalanguage" (138). There are many examples of humorous poetry

among the Greek epigrams, one of which is Nicarchus's dark commentary on judging the value of life:

Χειρουργῶν ἔσφαξεν Ἀκεστορίδην Ἀγέλαος·

ζῶν γὰρ χωλεύειν, φησίν, ἔμελλε τάλας. (10.30)

Agelaus killed Acestorides during surgery because,

he said, "The poor wretch would have been a cripple for life."

According to Riffaterre, readers recognize jokes when it becomes clear to them that two formally or semantically incompatible codes are present in the same text (125).[25] In this case, both the form and meaning of the traditional war-hero epitaph is negated. For example, Simonides' paean to the Athenians who died at Plataea begins, "If to die nobly is the chief part of excellence, to us out of all men Fortune gave this lot" (Mackail *Select* 3.1). The grim humor Nicarchus's epigram elicits in the reader depends on the reader's recognition of the absurdity generated by this formal intertextual conflict. Semantic conflict is perhaps more subtly but just as effectively produced in the first line by ἔσφαξεν, a word derived from the slitting of an animal's throat during sacrifice, σφάζω, only later applied (by Pindar) to human sacrifice (*Intermediate* 784). According to medical historian Ludwig Edelstein, Pythagorean physicians distinguished between practicing medicine (prevention, medication, setting fractures, and the like) and performing invasive surgery. They eschewed any use of the knife, contending that it was too closely associated with animal sacrifice (30-32). Hippocratic surgeons remained dubious about the practice. As Edelstein dryly observes, "Predictable occurrences of . . . mutilation argue for the use of special caution and special means" and "[T]he desire to perform an operation correctly

combines with the realization of how harmful it is to one's reputation to treat a patient poorly" (92). The notion of sacrifice is further amplified in χωλεύειν, which carries the negative connotation of its root, Χωλός, a metaphor for something imperfect and thus unsuitable for sacrifice. Lastly, τάλας is a descriptor that in its ambiguous sense of *wretched* can convey both pity and contempt.

Humorous poetry comments upon these tensions within naturalized concepts using an extreme form of catechresis, and Riffaterre regards it as a kind of metalanguage that opens up ordinary language's "potentialities" by "testing new semantic and semiotic relationships" (*Semiotics* 138). While Riffaterre generally conceives of Lyric as a determined unit of language that refers to its matrix for explanation, in the case of humor he inverts the hierarchy, so that to be understood, the matrix must wait for its explication in the poem: "[H]umor is nothing other than a special case of poetic language, and . . . poetic language is a special case of metalanguage (*Semiotics* 138). This concession that, at least in the realm of humor, the poem can act as a "metalanguage" that "opens up" and "tests" ordinary language, can serve to alert us to theories examined in later chapters.

Riffaterre's phenomenology of text production begins, then, by using the organic metaphor *matrix* but ends with manufacturing metaphors such as *expansion*, *conversion*, and *reconstruction* that, appropriate to Riffaterre's approach, connote the production of artifacts. Readers of texts engage in a reverse engineering that retraces steps leading to the product's raw materials. This analogy implies, however, that the dialogue under discussion is solely between text and reader. The material author, although a necessary condition for inscription to occur, is no longer necessary for understanding and re-production.[26]

Riffaterre, therefore, can concede with some equanimity that a poem is a material trace of an unavoidable and fascinating I-thou relationship while continuing to affirm that understanding it is a matter of dialogue between reader and text. His analysis implies that there are two subject/object relationships—the prosopopeia of the poem itself and the communication that takes place between text and reader. It may be that there are two distinguishable matrices as well—a mathematical matrix that is the formula by which the reader potentially can resolve all the linguistic elements of a poem and an organic matrix out of which is born the material inscription.

Julia Kristeva's "semiotic chora" and "the symbolic"

Kristeva's technical term for the latter, organic matrix is the semiotic *chora* "χώρα," which is borrowed from Plato's *Timaeus*. In this dialogue, Timaeus, renowned for his knowledge of astronomy and "the nature of the universe," first describes the creation of the world and world soul (27a). He then moves on to explain how individual things, as images of divine ideas, were created. In the context of his discussion of the relative natures of self-existent ideas and material bodies, he argues that space (*chora*) must be postulated as a third nature in which things are generated and make their appearance. This space, however, is never apprehended by the senses or the intellect; it is a necessary but inchoate notion, "apprehended, . . . by a kind of spurious reason, and is hardly real" (52b). Timaeus also likens the χώρα to a "mother," a "receptacle" (51a), and a universal "receiving principle" (50d). The elements of earth, air, fire, and water are mixed in it—their disproportionate energies having incited a constant motion in this "receiving vessel" (53a). The subsequent admixture generates the initial appearance of

created things, but their affiliation remains, to this point, random—"without reason and measure" (53b). Kristeva describes this *choric* environment as "an extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral stases" (*Revolution* 25).

Having borrowed the term, Kristeva adapts it to a Freudian analysis of the pre-conscious—what one of her translators describes as "an economy of primary processes articulated by Freud's instinctual drives . . . where social family structures make their imprint through the mediation of the maternal body" (Roudiez 6). This "imprint" subsequently is sealed by "the symbolic," a regulated order that bears the icon of the Cartesian ego, full of presence and rationality. Kristeva describes the turn in Western philosophy since Descartes toward rationalism as the ascent of the symbolic and observes that it was one of the conditions for the rise of the study of structural linguistics, itself an effort to identify the structure of language so as to re-present it to the self as a transparent object of knowledge (*Desire* 127). By her account, however, the *chora* resists such rationalization. When grasped by the symbolic, it excretes a surplus—an impolite transgression of the social order that signifies nonverbally even in the context of language. Literary language most clearly exposes what, to the rationalist, must be odious:

> If there exists a "discourse" which is not a mere depository of thin linguistic layers, an archive of structures . . . and is, instead, the essential element of a practice involving the sum of unconscious, subjective, and social relations in gestures of confrontation and appropriation, destruction and construction . . . it is "literature," or, more specifically, the *text*. (*Revolution* 16)

When texts "behave" irrationally, Riffaterre confidently intervenes with a key—an originating matrix iterable in ordinary language that is the text's rational mirror image. Kristeva, however, thinks that literature reflects a dialectic incarnated in the writer-subject; the text never completely submits to logic nor escapes into madness; nor can it be reduced to a fetishist "play of language" (*Revolution* 82). Rather, it instigates a return from the symbolic to the semiotic *chora* by introducing an "excess that would be 'more than logical'" (*Revolution* 83). This warfare at the boundaries of the semiotic and the symbolic ultimately constitutes the subject as ego (*Revolution* 82). A decisive victory by either side would render the subject psychotic.[27] For Riffaterre, matrix and text are equivalents. For Kristeva, the semiotic chora is Timaeus' "third nature"—a receptacle or space in which a collocation of pre-conscious images are generated and eventually become "visible" in the text as traces when they accommodate themselves to the logic of the symbolic order. The body, as nexus of the preconscious and the symbolic, releases drives that erupt into language at the same time that language is working its regulation of the body. From this point of view, the sepulchral epigram, for example, is the scene of a battle already lost; the subject either has been murdered, literally or figuratively, by ideology, or it has succumbed to its own death wish. Yet, as text, the subject once again confronts an other. In this epigram by the Byzantine Paulus Silentiarius, an unquiet spirit begins by questioning the reader and ends by questioning Logic's first principle—identity:

Οὔνομά μοι—τί δὲ τοῦτο ; πατρὶς δέ μοι—ἐσ τί δὲ τοῦτο ;

κλεινοῦ δ' εἰμὶ γένους—εἰ γὰρ ἀφαυροτάτου ;

Ζήσας ἐνδόξως ἔλιπον βίον—εἰ γὰρ ἀδόξως ;

κεῖμαι δ' ἐνθάδε νῦν—τις τίνι ταῦτα λέγεις ; (11.51)

My name—why? and my country—what for?

I am of illustrious race—but if I had been of the meanest?

Having lived nobly, I died—and if ignobly?

So then, I lie here now—Who says this, and to whom?

Just as an absurdist play makes visible its own theatrical conceits, Paulus' question and answer, address and response, reveals the conceit of the epigram's ritual dialogue. The pointed questions and the beginning of the last line, "κεῖμαι δ' ἐνθάδε νῦν" [So then, I lie here now] refer to two philosophemes. The first—that a final journey to Hades is the inevitable result of being born, no matter one's birthplace, class, or position—can be traced throughout Greek literature. The second is more closely affiliated with a late classical Greek attitude that discounted even the life well lived and articulated a disillusionment with and melancholy about life and its brevity.[28] To this point in the poem, however, the subject and addressee remain within the symbolic—the realm of a possible, regulated hermeneutic of life and death, even when its final conclusion is that found in the final line of another epigram by another Byzantine, Glycon:

Πάντα γέλως καὶ πάντα κόνις καὶ πάντα τὸ μηδέν·

πάντα γὰρ ἐξ αλόγων ἐστὶ τὰ γιγνόμενα.

All is laughter, and all is dust, and all is nothing; for out of unreason is all that is. (12.34).

The entire last line of Paulus' epigram, statement and questions— "κεῖμαι δ' ἐνθάδε νῦν—τίς τίνι ταῦτα λέγεις ;" [Who is saying this, and to whom?] intensifies this sentiment since a dead person cannot say anything and therefore can speak to no one. Paulus equivocates, then, on *presence*, calling attention to the way writing seems to enable speech *in absentia*. Yet the riddle of identity remains. There is the absence of Paulus, who first inscribed but is no longer present or necessary as speaker. There is the paradoxical presence/absence of a dead man who "is saying this." There are readers who come to ask questions that can be answered under the regime of the symbolic order but who are invited forthwith to ponder the mystery of their own death. Finally, there are current, "real," readers, who are invited to ponder the mystery of no one saying anything yet something being said by virtue of their own reading/saying. And what is being said, as much as it can be, is a "more than logical" upsurge from the matrix of semiotic *chora*: that life and death, presence and absence, do not possess their own identity. No one is "saying this," no one hears it being said, and no one understands it—not even those who solve the poem's riddle.

Jacques Maritain's "Creative Intuition"

In his 1952 A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art, Jacques Maritain explicated his notion of "creative intuition." Maritain presupposes the Aristotelian notion that matter and form are inextricably bound together and that knowledge arises only after sense perception, that is, *a posteriori*. The intellect knows the world by means of ideas; however, the intellect is not identical to its ideas; they are the

instruments by which we arrive at a knowledge of what things are—their *ratio*. This Aristotelian adjustment to Plato as adopted by Aquinas, has kept open, according to Maritain, an alternative doorway to knowledge that Descartes inadvertently closed. According to St. Thomas, the soul is not (just) the intellect; it acts in several ways. One of those ways, Maritain maintains, is through creative intuition, which is a mode of knowing the world that is pre-conceptual and nonrational. In a chapter entitled "Creative Intuition and Poetic Knowledge," Maritain offers a schema of the soul's activities (Fig. 5). The intuitive mode of knowledge is pre-conceptual because its apperception of the object is

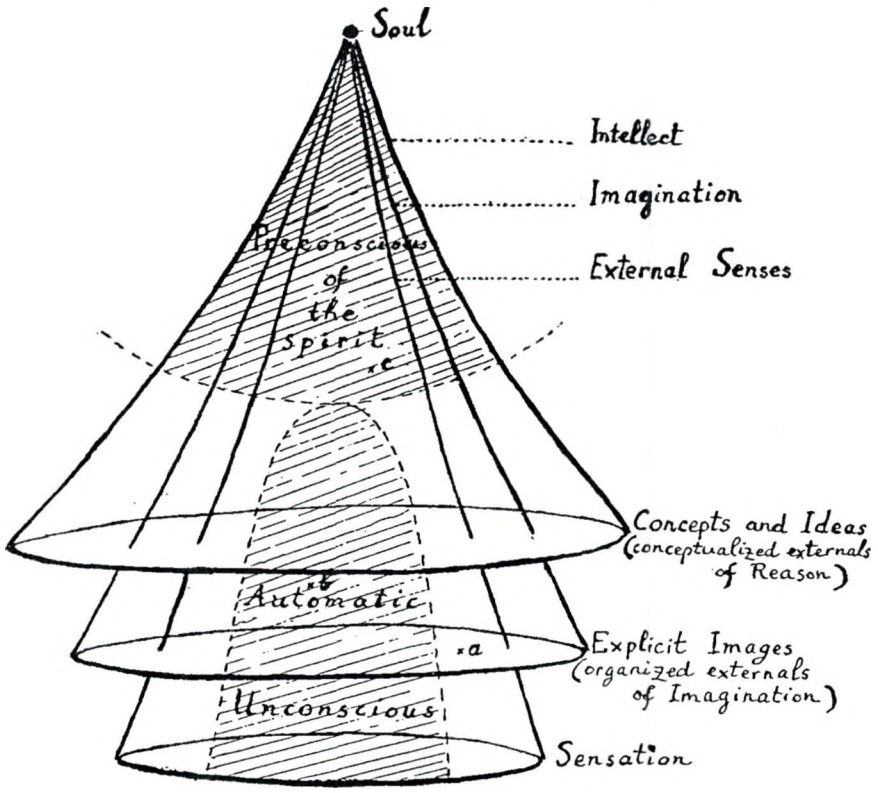

Figure 5. Schema of the soul's activities, according to Maritain (108).

preconceptual; it comes before the formation of concepts giving us rational knowledge about the object. It is nonrational because it is a union of subject and object that depends on emotion (desire) and will and can be known only mediately as a concept. The first circle encompasses the world of discursive reason. Because its mechanism is logic, we can suppose that it corresponds in part to Kristeva's symbolic. The second circle Maritain describes as the "waking state," wherein the imagination takes up sense perception and uses it to enable a person to function in the world of things and ideas. third circle represents sensation, a mixture of "intuitive data" that "becomes sense perception" when it encounters memory and imagination (108-109). Finally, the "top" of the soul is infused with what Maritain calls the "preconscious" of the spirit while its "bottom" participates in the "automatic unconscious," Maritain's acknowledgment of Freud. In words reminiscent both of Kristeva's description of the energies of the *chora* and Timaeus' account of a primeval mixing of elements, Maritain describes the circle of the Intellect as "an immense dynamism emanating from the very center of the Soul," and the circle of the imagination as "an immense dynamism working upwards and downwards along the depths of the Soul." Finally, the bodily sensations migrate to "the depths of the Soul" so that finally, "all that it [the soul] receives from the external world, all things seized upon by sense perception, all treasures of that sapid and sonorous and colorful Egypt, enter and make their way up to the central regions of the soul" (109).

For Maritain, an artist's essential intuition takes place in the context of an I-Thou relationship before reason (logos) comes into play. The soul (subject) grasps the object

(which may be an event, a person, a thing, etc.) intuitively in a dynamic matrix of instincts, drives, energies, images, will, and emotion. But these "rhythms" (Kristeva *Desire* 28), or this "musical stir" (Maritain 300) subsequently must pass through the regime of reason in order to become something made and something public, that is, a work of art. Maritain uses the word *pulsions* to denote this type of "mental wave or vibration, charged with dynamic unity" (302). Kristeva uses the same term, which according to her translators has been translated into English as "drives" to correspond to Freud's "*Trieb*" (Roudiez; Waller). Poetic intuition must submit to the logos in order to become intelligible and to enter the social world of communication. When it does, a dialogue can occur between text and reader.

Maritain agrees with Kristeva that modern poets often consciously seek to minimize the interference of the symbolic in communication. They rupture the text in order to transmit a "flash of reality which has been grasped without concept and which no

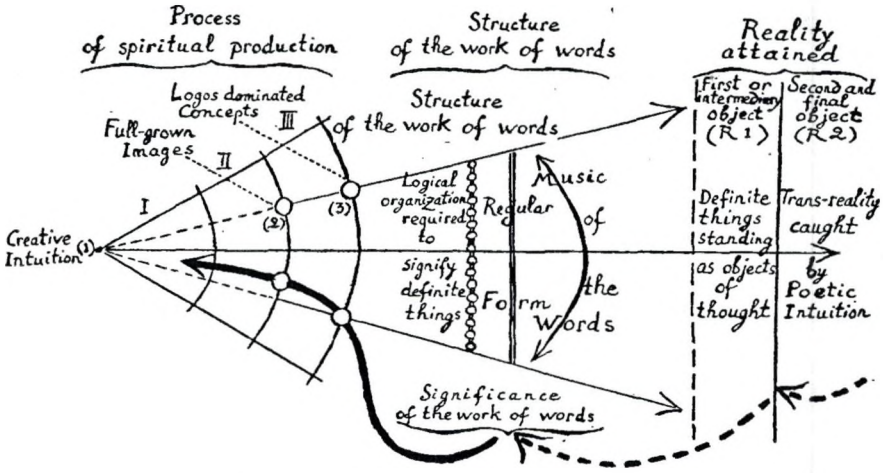

Figure 6. Maritain's schema showing the relationship between intuition and text in classical poetry (319).

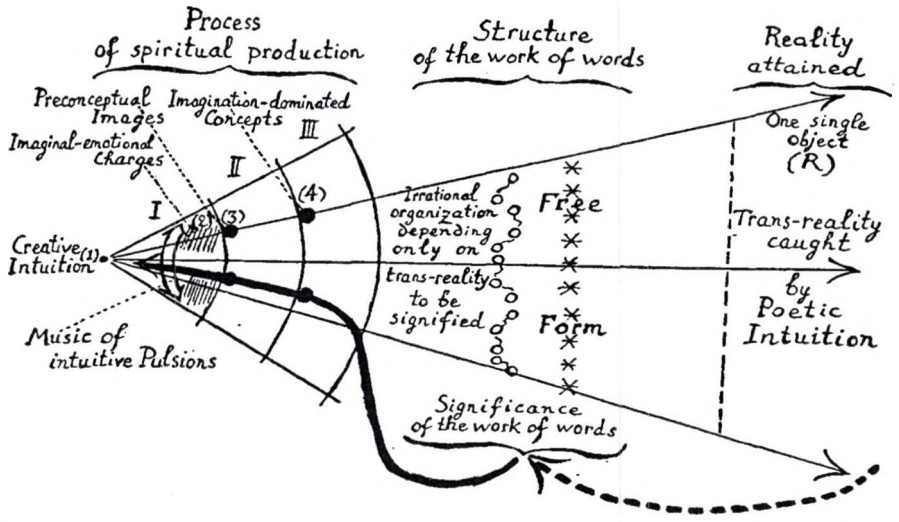

Figure 7. Maritain's schema showing the relationship between intuition and text in modern poetry (320).

concept can express" (312). He offers two schemata to illustrate the differences between what he describes as "classical" and "modern" poetry (Figs. 6 and 7).

The first diagram represents poetic intuition in a so-called classical poem passing through "Logos-dominated concepts" and submitting thoroughly to the "logical organization required to signify definite things" (320). The danger is that the reader will perceive in this work just Reality 1, which is "definite things standing as objects of thought" and miss the "transreality" (R2) that had been apprehended in the original intuition.

The second diagram corresponds to Kristeva's "revolution" in poetry. Here, the initial "process of spiritual production" is dominated not by logos but by imagination, and the structure of the work is nonrational because it depends "only on [the] transreality to be signified" (320). The happy result is significance at the original level of reality—the "trans-reality caught by poetic intuition" (320). Kristeva echoes this notion when she writes that

> the signifying economy of poetic language is specific in that the semiotic is not only a constraint as is the symbolic, but it tends to gain the upper hand at the expense of the thetic and predicative constraints of the ego's judging consciousness. (*Desire* 134)

Referring to the second diagram, Maritain comments that in modern poetry "[t]he creative process is free to start developing in the nest of dynamic unity" (320).

> The music of the words, still necessary as it may be, yields the foremost place to another, more internal music . . . . What matters essentially now is the music of intuitive pulsions, which passes into the work of words freely—without being repressed or obliterated by the exigencies of the logos—and to which the reader in his turn is taken by this work of words. (321)[29]

Maritain agrees with Kristeva, however, that because these energies are an essential aspect of truly poetic language, any literary period can bear witness to it. His finds in his own eclectic list of exemplars (which includes Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Racine, Pushkin, and Baudelaire) that

> in the fullness of the poetic sense the intelligible sense expands freely, and supreme clarity appears as the privilege of supreme mastery. Creative innocence is so powerful in them that it permeates with intuitive freedom the stoutest materials . . . and brings them to a state of fusion. (400)

He also cites two Saphhic fragments:

δέδυκε μὲν ἀ σελάννα

καὶ Πληΐαδες· μέσαι δὲ

νύκτες, παρὰ δ ἔρχετ ὤρα,

ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω.

The moon has set and the Pleiades; and now

it is midnight, and time goes by, and I lie alone. (Campbell 168B)[30]

and the famous

Ἤράμαν μὲν ἔγω σέθεν,Ἄτθι, πάλαι ποτά.

I loved you, Atthis, long ago. (Edmonds 48)

These poem fragments are remarkable for their simplicity, but that is not what Maritain meant by *clarity*. He is referring to a process of textual production that involves a minimum of inhibition or malformation of the poetic intuition by discursive concepts as it comes to be expressed in language. For both Kristeva and Maritain the semiosis of the poem involves this essential characteristic—the signified is the matrix of the drives, emotions, and imagination of the author that is set into motion by an act of knowing that precedes concepts; the poem signifies this knowledge. Transparency, then, is not necessarily a matter of simplicity in language; indeed, clarity, insofar as it is ordered by grammar and logic, is liable to be sacrificed for the sake of shattering the opacity of concepts.

Signs, Concepts, and Reference

Maritain anticipated the structuralist precept that poems are not products of mimesis, that is, they do not refer to empirical or mental objects, and Kristeva agrees. Yet their semiotic analyses differ. Each analysis proposes a different set of signs. For Kristeva, it is the material body that is signed in and under language but not by it. The body is a matrix of organic drives that seek expression. On the other hand, the symbolic order continually seeks to constitute it as subject and therefore dominate it. The body therefore becomes the locus of these contending forces. Language, as a communication system within the symbolic order, is thetic; it seeks to maintain subjects as closed systems under the control and guidance of concepts in order to maintain the stasis of social order. Literary, or poetic, language affords the significance of "jouissance":

> In cracking the socio-symbolic order, splitting it open, changing vocabulary, syntax, the word itself, and releasing from beneath them the drives borne by vocalic or kinetic differences, jouissance works its way into the social and symbolic. (*Revolution* 79-80)

It is through the literary text that the body, as matrix of change and revolution, insinuates itself into the "code of linguistic and social communication" by upsetting its logic and creating fissures in it as a closed system. This threat of anarchy sets up a dialectic between readers of the text and the dominant social order (*Revolution* 17).

Maritain, while proceeding in a more irenic vein, carries out a similar analysis. He

alludes to a saying of the "old Logicians": "Words refer to concepts, and concepts refer to things." Words in a poem will refer to any number of concepts that, in turn, will refer to specific things (physical or nonphysical), but the poem itself does not refer to any thing. The poem itself is a signifier only of the poetic sense, which is a nonconceptual act that uses the system of language to express experience. Poetic knowledge, unlike intellectual knowledge, does not have an object that it knows or intends; it creates an object that refers only to itself, that is, the matrix of intuition, will, emotion, and images out of which it arose. In her quatrain about being alone on a summer's night, for example, Sappho is expressing knowledge, but not of an intelligible object—something known through the intellect that can be paraphrased. Because words are ordered by logical and semantic rules to refer to intelligible concepts, a conceptual framework for the experience will emerge, but it will be a secondary sign.

For Riffaterre, if the language of the poem does not refer to the world, it must refer to another text. Signs, in their role as material signals, must be available to any competent reader and be publicly verifiable, just as a scientific experiment must be iterable for its working hypothesis to be generally accepted. Breaking the semiotic code of a poem provides at one stroke the operating structure, the language system, and the meaning of the poem as a signifier of its matrix. There is no meaning beyond or behind this meaning, and the proscription of the intentional fallacy—that the writer's experience is neither discoverable nor relevant—remains intact. Kristeva characterizes this as an anthropological attempt at a "phenomenological reduction":

> . . . structuralism retains only the image of the unconscious as a depository of laws and thus a discourse. Since they are considered solely from the point of view of their relationship to language and deprived of their drive bases, these structural operations depend on the phenomenological reduction, just as they depend on what this reduction is able to make visible: thetic symbolic functioning. . . . (*Revolution* 41).

The crux of the difference between the approach taken by Riffaterre as opposed to the parallel approach of Kristeva and Maritain, therefore, lies in the reference of the sign (Fig. 8).

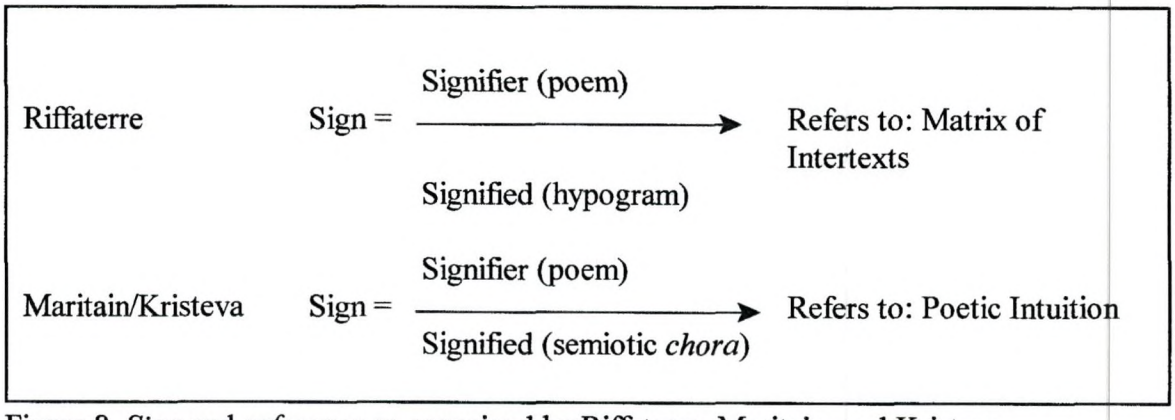

Figure 8. *Sign* and *reference* as conceived by Riffaterre, Maritain, and Kristeva

All three accept that the poem does not refer to things in the sense of reproduction or mimesis. For Riffaterre, the poem's significance lies in the matrix of texts out of which it is produced: "[T]he stock epithet is thus poetic because it implies a hypogram, usually a descriptive system . . . whose nuclear word remains unsaid and appears only in the

expanded form of a sentence. This sentence is the word's periphrasis, so that the true referent is not a lexeme in the text but a syntagm in the intertext" (31). For Kristeva and Maritain, however, the poem's significance lies in the experience of the subject who is inscribed within the poem. These approaches, however, are not incompatible, and recognizing both of them can shed some light on the limits both of structuralism and hermeneutics.

Escaping the Figural

Although Riffaterre embraces the notion of the subject/object relationship that is essential to Lyric, his real delight is in finding the key allusion that explicates just where the inscription of the author/subject is made manifest in the text. Since inscription is language, it must be ultimately determined by language itself. What Riffaterre does for structuralism is to offer a semiotic method of uncovering how a text has been produced, and to that extent, what the text means in terms of its generating matrix. The text does not perform this uncovering, it is the competent reader who does this by playing the game of catechresis. For Riffaterre, literature is a "verbal game" and poetry the verbal game *par excellence* (Semiotics 138). *Meaning*, however, is susceptible to equivocation. Semantic meaning does not capture other ordinary uses of the term. Most readers will continue to ask, even after deciphering a poem, what it means in terms of prosopopeiaoeia—its material reference. As Kristeva notes, the "externality" of the ego to the text has "always been a particular problem for semiotics, which is concerned with specifying the functioning of signifying practices such as art, poetry, and myth *that are irreducible to the*

'language' object" (emphasis added) (*Revolution* 21-22). Lyric, then, might be considered as signifier of nonrational knowledge that, because of its expression in language, tempts readers to fall under the thrall of concepts. If Kristeva and Maritain seem to ignore intertextuality, it is because in their view the translation of codes from one linguistic system to another does not speak to the will of the subject either to make (Maritain) or to resist being made (Kristeva). For Kristeva the importance of this point is even greater, since in her view language as the expression of the symbolic order is continually fastening itself upon the semiotic *chora* in order to realize a self that is static, determined, and incapable of resistance. If and when Lyric becomes significant, it is because it has elicited a surplus of resistance in the reader.

CHAPTER IV

ORIGINAL INSCRIPTIONS: "MAKING POETRY AND THINKING"

"What at first looks like the title of a thesis—making poetry and thinking—turns out to be the inscription in which our destined human existence has ever been inscribed. The inscription records that poetry and thinking belong together"—Martin Heidegger[31]

In Martin Heidegger's "A Dialogue on Language" (1954) the "Inquirer" concludes that "the essential *being* of language cannot be anything linguistic" and that "language, as sense that is sounded and written, is in itself suprasensuous, something that constantly transcends the merely sensible. So understood, language is in itself metaphysical" (*On the Way* 23-24; 35). Although this thesis appears in a new and specific context of a comparison between German and Japanese conceptions of language, Heidegger had been developing this perspective for some time.[32] The notion of language as something other- or more-than a signifying system is reflected, for example, in his studies (1943 to 1946) of the pre-Socratic philosophers, which include commentary on fragments from Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Parmenides. In *Early Greek Thinking*, Heidegger examines the pre-Socratics' use of terms such as τὸ ὄν, τὰ ὄντα, λέγειν, ἀλήθεια, and φάσκειν (Krell 6). Each of these word-studies is crucial to his explication of the relationship between poetry, language, and philosophy as well as being central to his

overall project of reinstating in the Western philosophical tradition a true appreciation of the question of being.[33]

Being and the "Presencing" of Beings

According to David Krell, Heidegger first focused on the terms *τὸ ὄν* [Being/*das Sein*] and *τὰ ὄντα* [the world of things/*das Seiende*], concluding that these terms connote not only the stasis of "presence in time and place," but the phenomenon of "*coming to presence* of whatever presents itself, the Being of beings, the ἐόν of ἐόντα" (Krell 7-8).[34] The relevant fragment from Anaximander is

> ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσίς ἐστι τοῖς οὖσι καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεών· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν. (qtd. in *Early Greek* 13)
>
> But where things have their origin, there too their passing away occurs according to necessity; for they pay recompense and penalty to one another for their recklessness, according to firmly established time. (Diels, qtd. in *Early Greek* 13)

What Diels translates as "things" in the very first phrase "ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσίς ἐστι τοῖς οὖσι" Heidegger takes as "τὰ ὄντα" [things/beings] (*Early Greek* 20). It is only later in the essay that he makes clear that he also takes *εἶναι, ἔστιν, ὄν*, and *τὰ ὄντα*, traditionally translated as "to be," "is," "being," and "beings" to be so integrally related as to raise the same problems of interpretation and translation (*Early Greek* 23).

This is the nexus of words surrounding the question of how Greek philosophers before Plato conceived the question of Being—a question that to Heidegger's mind remains unanswered: "all the notions and representation we have inherited from Greek philosophy remain in the same confusion, exiled for millennia" (*Early Greek* 25). For his part, Heidegger proposes a phenomenology of "presencing" as that which thinking first takes up as its concern. It is a two-fold process of revealing and concealing, which can appropriately called "Becoming," conceived in a positive sense rather than in its traditionally pejorative sense of something not yet actual (*Early Greek* 31). Being, which Heidegger defines at one point as "the incipient power gathering everything to itself, which in this manner releases every being to its own self," brings beings into presence, while necessarily hiding itself in the very act of doing so (*Poetry, Language* 100). What it reveals about itself in beings is therefore always imbued with paradox: "Beings come to pass in that errancy by which they circumvent Being and establish the realm of error (in the sense of the prince's realm or the realm of poetry)" (*Early Greek* 26). Traces of this sense of Becoming can be found, according to Heidegger, in archaic uses of the terms γένεσις and φθορά, used by Anaximander in the fragment, that stem from φύσις 'nature,' which Heidegger claims also bears the sense of a "luminous rising and decline":

> Γένεσις is coming forward and arriving in unconcealment. Φθορά means the departure and descent into concealment of what has arrived there out of unconcealment. The coming forward into . . . and the departure to . . . . become present within unconcealment between what is concealed and what

is unconcealed. They initiate the arrival and departure of whatever has arrived. (*Early Greek* 30)

What is concealed or unconcealed is, according to Heidegger, τὰ ὄντα 'beings,' and he notes at least one ancient use of this term that "poetically brings to language what ὄντα names" (*Early Greek* 32-33). It occurs in an early passage (lines 68-72) in *The Iliad*, where Kalchas the augur is described as one who sees past, present, and future.

. . . τοῖσι δ ἀνέστη
Κάλχας Θεοτορίδης οἰωνοπόλων ὄχ' ἄριστος
ὅς ἤδη τά τ ἐόντα τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα
καὶ νήεσσ ἡγήσατ' Ἀχαιῶν Ἴλιον εἴσω
ἣν διὰ μαντοσύνην, τήν οἱ πόρε φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων·

. . . and among them stood up
Kalchas, Thestor's son, far the best of the bird interpreters,
who knew all that is, is to be, or once was,
who guided into the land of Ilion the ships of the Achaeans
through that seercraft of his own that Phoibos Apollo gave him.

(Lattimore, qtd. in *Early Greek* 33)

According to Heidegger, it is important to note the etymological link between ὅς ἤδη, characterizing Kalchas as one of those who "knew," and this verb as a form of οἶδεν [he has seen] (*Early Greek* 33). This relationship provides Homer with a way of understanding the seer as one who has already gone forth to see the future and who now "sees" it as something that has already happened. Therefore what becomes present to the

seer is, as the passage states, the "three-fold" of "τά τ' ἐόντα τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα." These three presences, as the seer perceives them, are both discreet and the same. They are:

> an open expanse . . . of unconcealment, into which and within which whatever comes along lingers. . . . . What is past and what is to come also become present, namely as outside the expanse of unconcealment. . . . . Even what is absent is something present, for *as* absent from the expanse, it presents itself in unconcealment. What is past and what is to come are also ἐόντα. Consequently ἐόν means becoming present in unconcealment. (*Early Greek* 34-35)

"True time," according to Heidegger, " is the arrival of that which has been" (*On the Way* 176).[35] Here Heidegger's "preliminary observation" about the ancient Ionian and Aeolian forms of τὸ ὀν and τὰ ὄντα becomes important as a mode of thinking of "being" as that which "is" or "exists," since he believes that "[t]he epsilon in "ἐόν" and "ἐόντα" [dropped as early as Plato and Aristotle] is the epsilon in the root ἐσ of "ἔστιν, *est, esse* and 'is'" (*Early Greek* 32). A few decades after Anaximander, Heidegger observes, Parmenides establishes both ἐόν and εἶναι as the "fundamental words of Western thinking" (*Early Greek* 38). But he denies that Parmenides or his followers understood ἔστιν chiefly in terms of the copula; rather, he contends, even Aristotle understood "essence" not as a predicate that categorizes an object, but in its primal sense of παρουσία 'presence of things' (*Early Greek* 38).

"Saying" as "Laying Before"

Heidegger admits that the concept of future and past as implicit in presencing or unconcealment is a difficult one, and he contends that the experience of Being comes to language as a riddle that in the end only poetic thinking can solve (*Early Greek* 58). Greek thinkers offered their own solution by "designating" this presencing or unconcealing as Λόγος (*Early Greek* 39). Λέγειν 'saying' is therefore taken up by Heidegger as a key to understanding what poetic thinking is, and he takes care, especially in his study of a fragment attributed to Heraclitus, to articulate what he regards as its original usage. This fragment (B50) reads,

> οὐκ ἐμοῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ Λόγου ἀκούσατας
>
> ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστιν Ἓν Πάντα. (qtd. in *Early Greek* 59)
>
> When you have listened not to me but to the Meaning,
>
> it is wise within the same Meaning to say: *One* is All.
>
> (Snell, qtd. in *Early Greek* 59)

The key to understanding this particular "riddle," according to Heidegger, is to think about ἀκούσαντας, Λόγου, and ὁμολογεῖν in their basic forms of ἀκούειν, Λόγος and λέγειν (*Early Greek* 59-60). He outlines three successive, diachronic ways in which ancient writers employed λέγειν and which still occur (synchronically) in current usage. The first use was in the sense of a "collecting" and "gathering" that which is heard. "Hearing is primarily gathered hearkening," Heidegger observes, adding the startling comment, " We do not hear because we have ears. We have ears, i.e., our bodies are equipped with ears, because we hear" (*Early Greek* 65). This "hearkening," Heidegger

asserts, is the prerequisite for a gathering together of that which comes to be expressed in language, and he compares it to the Latin *legere*, rendered as "collecting and bringing together" (*Early Greek* 61). He assimilates this usage with a second that, for the most part, eventually supersedes it—that of "laying down" or "bringing before": "Λέγειν is to lay. Laying is the letting-lie-before—which is gathered into itself—of that which comes together into presence" (*Early Greek* 63). Finally, "laying before" attains a third and perhaps more commonly understood sense of "saying." But even this saying, as the fruit of listening and gathering, is not yet an element of a signifying system: "Λέγειν as laying, is determined neither by vocalization (φωνή) nor by signifying (σημαίνειν)" (*Early Greek* 64). Rather, saying as showing or ushering-into-view is a mode of conceiving Being that is more ocular than oral. Heidegger had emphasized this point already in *Being and Time*: "Being is that which shows itself in the pure perception which belongs to beholding, and only by such seeing does Being get discovered. Primordial and genuine truth lies in pure beholding" (215). Like Homer's μαντοσύνην 'seercraft,' it is a beholding-in-advance of that which becomes present as one thing:

> Do we wonder off the path if we think Λόγος as Λέγειν *prior to* all profound metaphysical interpretations, thereby thinking to establish seriously that λέγειν, as gathering letting-lie-together-before, can be nothing other than the essence of unification, which assembles everything in the totality of simple presencing? (*Early Greek* 70)

Heidegger's notion of λόγος is here identified with his explication of λεγειν; he can therefore say that "the λόγος by itself brings that which appears and comes forward in its

lying before us to appearance—to its luminous self-showing" (*Early Greek* 64). In addition, Heidegger's metaphors continue to forge a close relationship between becoming present and becoming visible, which leads him to two additional important terms for defining poetic thinking—φάσις and αλήθεια.

Illumination and Truth

Heidegger introduces φάσις in the context of two fragments by Parmenides on *Moῖρα* [Fate], the first of which is the short phrase "τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι" [For thinking and Being are the same] (qtd. in *Early Greek* 79). In the second, longer fragment there appears the similar line "*ταὐτὸν δ' ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὕνεκεν ἔστι νὸημα*" [Thinking and the thought "it is" are the same], followed by the cryptic "οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ᾧ πεφατισμέννον ἐστιν, / εὑρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν:" [For without the being in relation to which it is uttered you cannot find thinking;] (Diels-Kranz, qtd. in *Early Greek* 79).[36] Heidegger argues that in the second fragment Parmenides "experiences νοεῖν as πεφατισμεννον" in the sense of thinking as a process of revealing: "Νοεῖν, taking-heed-of, and what it takes up, are something said, something brought forward into view" (*Early Greek* 90). Once again, Heidegger makes an identification of terms, this time claiming that the "essence" of φάσκειν, from which *πεφατισμεννον* is derived, means "to invoke, to call upon," as in "letting something appear," and as in describing the "phases" [φάω], that is, the coming into view and fading from view of the moon and stars (*Early Greek* 90). Φημί [I say], which shares the same root [ΦΑ], is thereby identified with the "essence" of λέγω: "to bring what is present in

its presencing forward into shining appearance, into lying-before" (*Early Greek* 90). This etymology allows Heidegger to propose that Parmenides and Heraclitus were "saying" the same thing: "What Parmenides thinks as φάσις Heraclitus calls the Λόγος, the letting-lie-before that gathers" (*Early Greek* 93). In sum, "[W]e have to learn to think the essence of language from the saying, and to think saying as letting-lie-before (λόγος) and as bringing-forward-into-view (φάσις)" (*Early Greek* 91).

Heidegger's genealogy of *saying* uncovers for him the metaphor of language as that which illuminates what is coming to presence as being. The moment of illumination in speech, however, is not equivalent to its expression. In "The Way to Language," Heidegger argues that

> saying is in no way the linguistic expression added to the phenomena after they have appeared—rather, all radiant appearance and all fading away is grounded in the showing Saying. . . . Saying pervades and structures the openness of that clearing which every appearance must seek out and every disappearance leave behind, and in which every present or absent being must show, say, announce itself. (*On the Way* 126)

In the phenomenology of *saying*, there are two phases: speech that enables things to emerge or become ontologically visible as things and speech that utilizes language as iteration:

> To satisfy this demand [of preserving language's first phase] remains a difficult task because the first illumination of the essence of language as saying disappears immediately into a veiling darkness and yields

ascendancy to a characterization of language which relentlessly represents it in terms of φωνή, vocalization, and ultimately of data and information. (*Early Greek* 91)[37]

Φάσις, for Heidegger, comprises a synonymic series of dual metaphors: hearkening/beholding, collecting/gathering, illuminating/concealing, laying before/presencing, and showing/saying. Although he begins his discussion with λέγειν, followed by φάσις, he eventually inverts the hierarchy of their relationship. In the end, Λόγος receives its valence from φάσις via that term's derivation from the root ΦΆΩ 'to shine.' *Schein* and *Scheinen* as "appearing" and "coming to light" are similarly emphasized in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, where Heidegger alludes to one of Sappho's fragments:

ἄστερες μὲν ἀμφὶ κάλαν σελάνναν
ἂψ ἀπυκρύπτοισι φάεννον εἶδος
ὅπποτα πλήθοισα μάλιστα λάμπη γᾶν (34 Eust. *Il.* 729. 20)
The stars hide away their shining forms around the lovely moon when in all her fullness she shines (over all) the earth. (trans. Campbell 83)

Heidegger concludes, "When we say: the moon shines [*scheint*], this means not only that it spreads a glow [*Schein*], a certain brightness, but also: it stands in the sky, it is present, it is. The stars shine: glittering, they are present. Here appearance [*Schein*] means exactly the same as being" (85). For Heidegger, *Schein* does carry the double meaning of "glowing" and "being present." It is, however, the second meaning, "being present," or perhaps more precisely, "appearing" that he wants to point out as equivalent to "being."

The ultimate importance of this illumination, succinctly if cryptically summarized in his oracular "The event of lighting is the world," leads Heidegger to consider its relation to Truth (*Early Greek* 118). The initial "disclosure" and immediate reciprocal concealment of the Being of beings, according to Heidegger, is indeed what the pre-Socratics meant by ἀλήθεια [truth,] so that in the end we have the ultimate identification of φάσις, λόγος, and ἀλήθεια: "Because Λόγος lets lie before us what lies before us as such, it discloses what is present in its presencing. But disclosure is 'Αλήθεια. This and Λόγος are the Same. Λέγειν lets ἀλήθεια, unconcealed as such, lie before us" (*Early Greek* 70).[38] Once again, however, Heidegger calls attention to what he perceives as an original use of the term that, since Plato, has gradually become opaque to the very language to which it gave birth. Disclosure ('Αλήθεια) engenders a beholding-saying (φάσισ-λέγειν), which, for the thinker-poet, illuminates the reason (Λόγος) such that it can "think" the disclosure in an assertion (φάσειν-φαίνω). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger had argued that this asserting ("discourse"} "helps to constitute the disclosedness of Being-in-the World" (205). Λόγος, later conceived as the "natural light" of Reason in Western philosophy, therefore has a dual nature:

> *Lumen naturale*, natural light, i.e., the illumination of reason, already presupposes the disclosure of the duality. The same holds true of the Augustinian and medieval views of light—not to mention their Platonic origins—which could only develop under the tutelage of an 'Αλήθεια already reigning in the destiny of the duality. (*Early Greek* 97)

Heidegger's perception of this inherent duality in what it means both to say and to assert the truth is central to the relationship he establishes between poetry and thinking. The "thinking" of which he speaks in conjunction with poetry is a hearkening to Being that is prior to the illumination of reason and the formal fashioning of any poem (or art in general): "Thinking of Being is the original way of poetizing. Language first comes to language, i.e., into its essence, in thinking. Thinking says what the truth of Being dictates . . . . [It] is primordial poetry, prior to all poesy, . . . since art shapes its work within the realm of language" (*Early Greek* 19). And while he concentrates on this synchronic revelation of truth in language, it is nevertheless important to Heidegger's own "thinking" that historically it was the Greeks who first "beheld" Being: "What is Greek is the dawn of that destiny in which Being illuminates itself in beings and so propounds a certain essence of man . . . ." (*Early Greek* 25). Heidegger calls this "the poetizing of the truth of Being in the historic dialogue between thinkers" (*Early Greek* 57). The original and fecund dialogue is one in which Being "shines," speaking in this way to mortals as beings who care and who, ever cognizant of error, endeavor nevertheless to shadow this dialogue to fellow mortals in order to invoke in them a memory in kind. Heidegger argues that "Μνμοσύνη is mother of the muses," (*Early Greek* 36) and in one of his own poems published under the collective title of "The Thinker as Poet," he writes,

> The oldest of the old follows behind
> us in our thinking and yet it
> comes to meet us.

That is why thinking holds to the

coming of what has been, and

is remembrance. (*Poetry, Language* 10)

Hölderlin and Thinking Poetry

According to Steiner, it is Heidegger's "strangely Platonic" view that "[t]o think fundamentally is not to analyze but to 'memorate' (*Denken ist andenken*), to remember Being so as to bring it into radiant disclosure" (129).[39] One of the most important things the poet does is to recognize, in the sense of a re-cognition, what is burgeoning forth in language as thought. For Heidegger, this "seercraft" was best exemplified in the poetry of Friederich Hölderlin (1770-1843). Like Heidegger, Hölderlin was "prepossessed by the magnitude of the Greek intelligence" (Middleton, xii). He translated Sophocles and Pindar, and Christopher Middleton categorizes him as a poet in the ancient pastoral tradition, whose metrics often can be characterized as "Greco-Alemannic" (xi-xii). His contemporary philosophical influences included Schelling and Hegel, both of whom he met, as well as Herder and Schiller (Middleton iv, xv-xvi). He even attended Fichte's lectures, but, as Middleton notes, could not in the end accept what he perceived in Fichte's ideas as a radical subjectivism (xix).

Steiner contends that Heidegger found in Hölderlin's poetry "one of those very rare, immeasurably important expressions of man's fallenness, of his ostracism from Being and the gods, and simultaneously, a statement of this very condition whose truth and lyric power give assurance of rebirth" (141-142). Heidegger read in Hölderlin's lyrics the poetic expression of his own philosophical project of recovering the meaning of Being.

In his "Note" attached to "Remembrance of the Poet," for example, Heidegger remarks that he was not attempting literary criticism as such in that essay (which includes detailed explication of specific passages in Hölderlin) nor in "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry." Instead, he writes, these essays "arise from a necessity of thought" and can best be read in the light of two of his more conventionally philosophical essays, "On the Essence of Truth" and "What is Metaphysics" (*Existence and Being* 232).[40] Although Heidegger treats at some length a few other poets, such as Rilke and Trakl, it is Hölderlin who figures most prominently in those of Heidegger's lectures and essays that focus upon poetry and poetic thought.[41]

Even the essay "What Are Poets For?" ostensibly a lengthy treatment of Rilke's poetry, is made to serve as a litmus test of whether or not Rilke is a "true" poet in comparison to Hölderlin.[42] In the first section of this essay, for example, Heidegger articulates his vision of the poet's vocation in the context of Hölderlin's elegy "Bread and Wine." Midway through the poem, the speaker asks the question that had been used in truncated form in the essay's title: "What are poets for in a destitute time?" The question is embedded in a lament that the gods, both of Greece and Jerusalem, have departed from earth. Humans now languish in a "Night," a time when everyone is "asleep" and no one listens to poetry. Yet, the voice says, even the Night is sometimes sweet:

> Aber zuweilen liebt auch klares Auge den Schatten
> Und versuchet zu Lust, eh' es die Noth ist, den Schlaf,
> Oder es blikt auch gern ein treuer Mann in die Nacht hin,
> Ja, es ziemet sich ihr Kränze zu weihn und Gesang,

Weil den Irrenden sie geheiliget ist und den Todten,

Selber aber besteht, ewig, in freiestem Geist.

Aber sie muß uns auch, daß in der zaudernden Weile,

Daß im Finstern für uns einiges Haltbare sei,

Nonetheless there are times when clear eyes too love the shadows,

Tasting sleep uncompelled, trying the pleasure it gives,

Or a loyal man too will gaze into Night and enjoy it,

Yes, and rightly to her garlands we dedicate, humans,

Since to all those astray, the mad and the dead she is sacred,

Yet herself remains firm, always, her spirit most free.

But to us in her turn, so that in the wavering moment,

Deep in the dark there shall be something that endures,

(Hamburger 242-43, 2.7-14)[43]

Most importantly for the poet, the night is an eschatological sign, a necessary prelude to the gods' return, even though it marks a time of deafness, blindness, and suffering:

und stark machet die Noth und die Nacht

Biß daß Helden genug in der ehernen Wiege gewachsen,

Herzen an Kraft, wie sonst, ähnlich den Himmlischen sind.

Donnernd kommen sie drauf.

Night and distress make us strong

Till in that cradle of steel heroes enough have been fostered,

Hearts in strength can match heavenly strength as before.

Thundering then they come. (Hamburger 248-250, 7.8-11)

Meanwhile, the poets flit about, hardly wanted, like Dionysus' priests, "*Welche von Lande zu Land zogen in heiliger Nacht*" [Who in holy Night roamed from one place to the next] (Hamburger 250-51, 7.16) until *"Seelige Weise sehns; ein Lächeln aus der gefangnen / Seele leuchtet, dem Licht thauet ihr Auge noch auf"* [Blissful, the wise men see it; in souls that were captive there gleams a / Smile, and their eyes shall yet thaw in response to the light] (Hamburger 252-53, 9.15-16).

Heidegger quickly makes clear that he interprets this poem against the background not of Romanticism, but in the context of Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical legacy, which he understands as having introduced a new historical era, "the era to which we ourselves still belong," chiefly characterized by a "double Not: the No-more of the gods that have fled and the Not-yet of the god that is coming" (*Poetry, Language* 91; *Existence and Being* 289). This is not to say, however, that humans have been delivered from a world well lost. For Hölderlin, at least, the gods were integral to a reality of which humans had lost sight and even memory. Middleton notes, for example, that one of the questions that preoccupied Hölderlin from his youth was "[w]hat is to be done when divine and human planes of being cease to connect" (xvi). Heidegger argues that it is this loss of relationship that provokes at once a sense of melancholia and foreboding within human societies: "The time of the world's night is the destitute time, because it becomes ever more destitute. It has already grown so destitute, it can no longer discern the default of God as a default" (*Poetry, Language* 91). Only a "turn" on the part of mortals would

allow the immortals a "return," but the destitution becomes such that few even realize the dire state of affairs (*Poetry, Language* 92-93). In the seventh stanza of "Bread and Wine," the speaker exclaims that even if the gods are willing to return, the very sight of them, in this era of destitution and forgetfulness, would blind rather than reveal.

Aber Freund! Wir kommen zu spät. Zwar leben die Götter
Aber über dem Haupt droben in anderer Welt.
Endlos wirken sie da und scheinens wenig zu achten,
Ob wir leben, so sehr schonen die Himmlischen uns.
Denn nicht immer vermag ein schwaches Gefäß sie zu fassen,
Nur zu Zeiten erträgt göttliche Fülle der Mensch.
But, my friend, we have come too late. Though the gods are living,
Over our heads they live, up in a different world,
Endlessly there they act and, such is their kind wish to spare us,
Little they seem to care whether we live or do not.
For not always a frail, a delicate vessel can hold them,
Only at times can our kind bear the full impact of gods.
Ever after our life is dream about them. (Hamburger 248-49, 7.1-7)

The poet is one of those few who might "hold them" and who ventures into what has become a void in consciousness, there to find and listen anew to the gods and afterwards return as a herald of a new age: "Poets are the mortals who . . . sense the trace of the fugitive gods, stay on the gods' tracks, and so trace for their kindred mortals the way toward the turning" (*Poetry, Language* 94).

Hölderlin of course precedes Nietzsche, but Heidegger avoids the charge of anachronism by casting him in this role of "precursor of poets"—someone who "does not go off into a future; rather, he arrives out of that future, in such a way that the future is present only in the arrival of his words" (*Poetry, Language* 142). In Hölderlin's "Exhortation," a voice prophecies:

> Und er, der sprachlos waltet und unbekannt
> Zukünftiges bereitet, der Gott, der Geist
> Im Menschenwort, am schönen Tage
> Kommenden Jahren, wie einst, sich ausspricht.
>
> And he who silent rules and in secret plans
> Things yet to come, the Godhead, the Spirit housed
> In human words, once more, at noontide,
> Clearly will speak to the future ages.
>
> (Hamburger 162-63, 25-28)

Heidegger relates this poetic mission to his own philosophical account of Being:

> The poet thinks his way into the locale defined by that lightening of Being which has reached its characteristic shape as the realm of Western metaphysics in its self-completion. . . . The locality to which Hölderlin came is a manifestness of Being, a manifestness which itself belongs to the destiny of Being and which, out of that destiny, is intended for the poet. (*Poetry, Language* 95)

The remainder of the essay "What Are Poets For?" is devoted to answering the question of whether or not "we moderns" can identify a contemporary poet who has likewise ventured into this "abyss" and found a place from which to recall kindred humans to Being; specifically, whether Rilke is such a poet (*Poetry, Language* 96). Meanwhile, Hölderlin's poems remain relevant because it is still night, a "holy" night that in its silence waits for a word: "This is why the poet in the time of the world's night utters the holy. This is why, in Hölderlin's language, the world's night is the holy night" (*Poetry, Language* 94).

Greek theology and Christian eschatology are similarly implicit in Heidegger's exegesis of Hölderlin's long poem "Homecoming," which appears in its entirety in the essay "Remembrance of the Poet" (*Existence and Being* 236-242). Rejecting both "elegy" and "hymn" as appropriate categories, Heidegger calls it a "meditation" on the "Holy," defined as "that which the poet in his poethood invokes" (*Existence and Being* 233).[44] Subtitled "To Kindred Ones" and divided into five stanzas, it describes the joys, and (at least Heidegger will insist) the sorrows of a homecoming. The speaker in the poem is sailing across a lake towards harbor and home, commenting on the surroundings and at times addressing the beloved "kinsmen" who wait on shore.[45] Once again it is night, but a night that is nevertheless "bright," and the sailor is cognizant of the "Joyous": "There amid the Alps it is still bright night and the cloud, / Writing of the Joyous, covers the night within the yawning valley" (1.1-2). The first stanza continues as a hymn to Nature. In the second stanza, the homecomer praises the "[b]lissful god rejoicing in the play of holy beams" (2.4) and in the third testifies to praying often to this god ("Much spoke I to him,

for whatever poets meditate or sing / Is of value chiefly to the angels and to him") on behalf of home and kindred, who seem "beset with care" (3.1-2, 5). In the fourth and fifth stanzas, the speaker offers praises once again for the beauty of the surrounding hills and valleys, expressing a desire to "go out into the much-promising distance, / There, where wonders are . . . . ." but even more, "[t]o go home, where flowering ways are known to me" (4.7-8, 14). Lastly, the "Angels" of house and year are invoked, that they would "Ennoble! Rejuvenate! So that no human good, no / Hour of the day may be fittingly hallowed / Without the Joyful Ones and without such joy as now," adding only that we must be careful in our invocations: "No god loves what is unseemly; / To grasp him [god], our joy is scarcely large enough. / Often we must keep silence; holy names are lacking" (5.21-23, 27-29). For the kindred ones who await the homecomer's arrival, however, any "cares" such as these are to be subsumed under the greater joy; it is the poet alone who, "whether he wills or no," must "bear" them (5.35-36).

Heidegger makes much of the ultimate phrase of the poem, "*aber die anderen nicht*" [but the others not] (5.36), arguing that the poem is in fact framed by dual negative images of the traditional, stereotyped picture of the joy of homecoming. The first stanza of the poem includes, for example, a description of the machinations of nature that, Heidegger observes, is not so much homely as terrifically sublime (*Existence and Being* 243): "Cascades are falling, the ground steams under the tumbling, / Echo sounds all about, and the imponderable workshop / Moves its arm by day and night, conferring gifts" (1.16-18). Heidegger also interprets Hölderlin's use of *seems* in "All seems familiar, even

the hastening greeting / Seems the greeting of friends, each face seems congenial" (3.17-18) which occurs at the end of stanza three, in its strongest sense of implying that an opposite state of affairs actually obtains. Even though the homecomer is happy to see the kindred, true familiarity with them is unlikely; according to Heidegger, they "shut away what is most their own" (*Existence and Being* 244). This reticence and liminal anxiety, Heidegger argues, emerges clearly in the last stanza, and he cautions against a simplistic reading of the poem's overall message.

> Often we must keep silence; holy names are lacking,
> Hearts beat and yet does speech still hold back?
> But lyre-music lends to each hour its sounds
> And perhaps rejoices the heavenly ones who draw near.
> This makes ready and thus care too is almost
> Placated already—the care that entered into the joy.
> Cares like these, whether he wills or no, a singer
> Must bear in his soul and often, but the others not. (5.28-35)

Heidegger first notes that, despite the poem's consistent reference to the divine, there is no "holy name" by which its presence can be invoked such that humans could "grasp" it. Thus, the "singer" knows that song, or speech, is inappropriate, which leaves only the dumb music of the lyre to "perhaps" charm the gods.[46] This is the burden of the poet—to be filled with a joy that can be expressed only in melody that "perhaps rejoices the heavenly ones who draw near" and serves to "placate" those kindred who grow uneasy performing a ritual in which they cannot name what they worship:

> Therefore too the people of the country may not attempt to make to themselves a god by cunning and thus put aside by force the supposed lack. But neither may they accommodate themselves merely by calling on an accustomed god. . . . So for the poet's care there is only one possibility: without fear of the appearance of godlessness he must remain near the failure of the god [to appear], and wait long enough in the prepared proximity of the failure, until out of the proximity of the failing god the initial word is granted, which names the High One. (*Existence and Being* 265)

Heidegger takes the "others" found in the ultimate phrase of the last line of the poem "*aber die anderen nicht*" 'but the others not' to mean the homecomer's "kindred," who are exempted from the care that the singer must always bear, "whether he wills or no" (*Existence and Being* 266).[47] This he takes to be fair warning about the sorrows awaiting poets who decide to follow their calling. In the autobiographical poem, "Home," Hölderlin bears witness to this destiny. It begins:

> Froh kehrt der Schiffer heim an den stillen Strom,
> Von Inseln fernher, wenn er geerndtet hat;
> So käm' auch ich zur Heimath, hätt' ich
> Güter so viele, wie Laid, geerndtet.
> . . . . . .
> Denn sie, die uns das himmlische Feuer leihn,
> Die Götter schenken heiliges Laid uns auch,

Drum bleibe diß. Ein sohn der Erde

Schein' ich; zu lieben gemacht, zu leiden.

Content the boatman turns to the river's calm

From distant isles, his harvest all gathered in;

So too would I go home now, had I

Reaped as much wealth as I've gathered sorrow.

. . . . . .

For they who lend us heavenly light and fire,

The gods, with holy sorrow endow us too.

So be it then. A son of Earth I

Seem; and was fashioned to love, to suffer.

(Hamburger 142-43, 1.1-4; 6.1-4)

The poet is forever coming home to dwell once again, if possible, in the homeland. "The vocation of the poet is homecoming," Heidegger observes, "by which the homeland is first made ready as the land of proximity to the source. To guard the mystery of the reserving proximity to the Most Joyous, . . . that is the care of homecoming" (*Existence and Being* 266). And in "The Poet's Vocation," Hölderlin writes,

Wenn edler, denn das Wild, der Mann sich

Wehret und nährt! denn es gilt ein anders,

Zu sorg' und Dienst den Dichtenden anvertraut!

Der Höchste, der ists, dem wir geeignet sind,

Daß näher, immerneu besungen

Ihn die befreundete Brust vernehme.

When, nobler than wild beasts, men work to

Fend, to provide for themselves—to poets

A different task and calling have been assigned.

The Highest, he it is whom alone we serve,

So that more closely, ever newly

Sung, he will meet with a friendly echo.

(Hamburger 172-733, 3.3-4; 4.1-4)

Therefore, according to Heidegger, even though the people of the homeland do not bear the poet's burden, they are not exempt from the responsibility of the care of listening to the singer/homecomer: "The 'not' [of the last line of "Homecoming"] is the mysterious call 'to' the others in the fatherland, to become hearers, in order that for the first time they should learn to know the essence of the homeland. 'The others' must for the first time learn to consider the mystery of the reserving proximity" (*Existence and Being* 266-67).

According to Heidegger, although this poem is framed by a cautionary tale of hearing yet failing to hear, it nevertheless establishes a close association between homecoming and joy (variously termed throughout the poem as the "Joyous," the "Most Joyous," and the "Joyous One"). The epitaph of the address, for example, is a couplet by Hölderlin: "Little knowledge, but much joy / Is given to mortals. . . ." (*Existence and Being* 243).[48] "The Joyous" occurs as early as the second line, where, in a curious personification, a cloud that covers the valley is said to be "writing of the Joyous" as a

portent of hope: "There amid the Alps it is still bright night and the cloud / Writing of the Joyous, covers the night within the yawning valley" (*Existence and Being* 236). For Heidegger, the cloud is that which both reveals and conceals the gods:

> The cloud hovers between the summits of the Alps, and covers the mountain ravines, down into whose unlighted depths the serenifying beam of light penetrates. But the cloud . . . dreams between the heights towards the Joyous. The cloud, as it composes, points upward into the Serene. (*Existence and Being* 250)

Serene does not occur in the poem; it is the term Heidegger chooses to describe that into which all forms of the joyous resolve: "The cloud is serenified into the Serene. What it writes, the 'Joyous,' is the Serene" (*Existence and Being* 247). The cloud, then, works as an analogy of the relationship between Being and being. Just as the cloud, although occluding the valley's view of heaven, writes the Joyous by virtue of being lit from the brightness of the Serene above it, so the poet, who has become an ephemera in the "destitute time" of the forgetfulness of gods, can write Being by virtue of dwelling and listening in proximity to that which is at present forgotten. And just as the poet, by venturing into the nearness of Being, allows language to come to poetry, so "The cloud writes poetry. . . . The poetry does not come from the cloud. It comes upon the cloud in the form of what the cloud is lingering over against" (*Existence and Being* 247). Being cannot be revealed without human speech; the "high one" cannot reach down to mortals without the help of one who "first (and therefore alone) comes singing to meet the Joyous One and already forms part of him" (*Existence and Being* 252). This "First" is someone

"who poetically rejoices in the face of the greeting heralds, in order that he, alone and in advance, may first conceal the greeting in the word" (*Existence* 268-69). In "The Rhine," Hölderlin reflects again upon this sense of vocation, although in this poem he is obviously less sanguine about home and homecoming:

Es haben aber an eigner
Unsterblichkeit die Götter genug, und bedürfen
Die Himmlischen eines Dings,
So sinds Heroën und Menschen
Und Sterbliche sonst. Denn weil
Die Seeligsten nichts fühlen von selbst,
Muß wohl, wenn solches zu sagen
Erlaubt ist, in der Götter Nahmen
Theilnehmend fühlen ein Andrer,
Den brauchen sie; jedoch ihr Gericht
Ist, daß sein eigenes Haus
Zerbreche der und das Liebste
Wie den Feind schelt' und sich Vater und Kind
Begrabe unter den Trümmern,
Wenn einer, wie sie, seyn will und nicht
Ungleiches dulden, der Schwärmer.
But their own immortality
Suffices the gods, and if

The Heavenly have need of one thing,

It is of heroes and human beings

And other mortals. For since

The most Blessed in themselves feel nothing

Another, if to say such a thing is

Permitted, must, I suppose,

Vicariously feel in the name of the gods,

And him they need; but their rule is that

He shall demolish his

Own house and curse like an enemy

Those dearest to him and under the rubble

Shall bury his father and child

When one aspires to be like them, refusing

To bear with inequality, the fantast. (Hamburger 415, 8)

Steiner comments that for Heidegger, "It is the poet's calling—literal, soul-consuming, imperative to the point of personal ruin—to bring creation into the neighborhood of the divine" (142). "Homecoming," then, signifies yet another dual relationship: that between the poet and the Joyous One(s) and that between the poet and fellow mortals. The poet, "first (and therefore alone)" already has made a homecoming by returning to "the proximity of the source" (*Existence and Being* 252, 256). Now, however, the poet's vocation calls for an additional homecoming that is "bringing near the Near, while keeping it at a distance. Proximity to the source is a mystery" (*Existence and Being* 259).

Neither poet nor kindred can know the Source; only the mystery can be known, and it must be guarded carefully as such. There is that "reserve" in the kindred that creates concern in the homecomer; there also is a guardedness in the poet that reserves for the sake of the holy. Bringing home mystery rather than science, however, makes the poet appear foolish: "To say that something is near and that at the same time it remains at a distance—this is tantamount either to violating the fundamental law of ordinary thought, the principle of contradiction, or on the other hand to playing with empty words. . . ." (*Existence and Being* 260). Because the poet is compelled to speak nevertheless, the joyous homecoming, the hymn to God and mortals, heaven and earth becomes an elegy in the midst of the serenity of joy. It is only nearness and mystery that are "revealed"; the poet must bear with both the absence of holy names and the kindred's misunderstanding: "Therefore the joy of the poet is in fact the care of the singer, whose singing guards the Most Joyous as the reserved, and brings the sought-for near in a reserving proximity" (*Existence and Being* 262). In this context, Heidegger quotes the epigram that Hölderlin wrote as a preface to his translation of Sophocles' tragedies:

> Many have sought in vain to tell
> joyously of the Most Joyous. Now
> at last it declares itself to me,
> now in this grief. (*Existence and Being* 262)

For the poet, grief, sorrow, and care are the ultimate catalysts for true joy: "Grief, separated from mere melancholy by a gap, is joy which is serenified for the Most Joyous, so long as it still reserves itself and hesitates" (*Existence and Being* 262).

However foolish it sounds, the poet is compelled to "sing." Heidegger's plea to his audience is to take the foolishness to heart. He pleads with his listeners, for example, not to separate the literal references in "Homecoming" to the Bodensee (the lake that he assumes is the setting for the poem) from allusions in the same poem to "The citadel of the heavenly ones / As in the ancient belief," and he delivers a jeremiad against what he perceives as the intractable dullness of his fellow Germans:

> How long are we going to imagine that there was first of all a part of nature existing for itself and a landscape existing for itself, and that then with the help of "poetic experiences" this landscape became colored with myth? How long are we going to prevent ourselves from experiencing the actual as actual? (*Existence and Being* 255)

The "innermost core" of the poem, he had mentioned in passing in his prefatory remarks, "is concealed in a line in the third stanza, which mentions the "'people of the country'" (*Existence and Being* 234). The relevant context is: "Much [I prayed] for you also who are beset with care in the fatherland, / To whom the holy gratitude smiling brings the fugitive, / People of the country! . . ." (3.5-7). And although he adds that he does not intend to address this "core" issue, by the end of the essay Heidegger is speaking directly to this point. His fellow Germans, the "people of the country," he will regard as fugitives in their own land until they learn to share in the concern of the poet for the fatherland as that place of "proximity to the Near" (*Existence and Being* 264). The homecoming of the poet, which "holds concealed the poetic call to the dearest in the homeland," is destined

eventually to become "the future of the historical being of the German people" (*Existence and Being* 268).

Heidegger expands upon this theme of the "actuality" of thinking the world poetically in ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . . ." In this essay, first presented as a lecture in 1951, Heidegger reiterates that the appeal of language to which humans must respond is "that which speaks in the element of poetry" (*Poetry, Language* 216). Listening to language and speaking language is the true nature of homecoming, but this is not symbolic homecoming; it is truly a return to an earthly dwelling in time and space. The title of the essay is taken from a line in Hölderlin's three-part poem *"In Lieblicher Bläue . . ."* ["In Lovely Blueness . . ."] .[49] Heidegger comments upon just the last half of the poem's first section and the very beginning of the second section. It is the first section that contains the phrase upon which he builds his essay. Albert Hofstadter translates the relevant lines as "Full of merit, yet poetically, man / dwells on this earth" (*Poetry, Language* 216). The lines preceding this phrase are a series of images that suggest someone looking up at a church steeple with its bell tower set off against a bright blue sky. Then follow the meditative lines that Heidegger examines:

> So sehr einfältig aber die Bilder, so sehr heilig sind die, daß man wirklich oft fürchtet, die zu beschreiben. Die Himmlischen aber, die immer gut sind, alles zumal, wie Reiche, haben diese, Tugend und Freude. Der Mensch darf das nachahmen. Darf, wenn lauter Mühe das Leben, ein Mensch aufschauen und sagen: so will ich auch seyn? Ja. So lange die Freundlichkeit noch am Herzen, die Reine, dauert, misset nicht unglüklich

der Mensch sich mit der Gottheit. Ist unbekannt Gott? Ist er offenbar wie der Himmel? dieses glaub' icht eher. Des Menschen Maaß ist's. Voll Verdienst, doch dichterisch, wohnet der Mensch auf dieser erde. Doch reiner ist nicht der Schatten der Nacht mit den Sternen, wenn ich so sagen könnte, als der Mensch, der heißet ein, Bild der Gottheit.

Giebt es auf Erden ein Maaß? Es giebt keines. Nemlich es hemmen den Donnergang nie die Welten des Schöpfers. Auch eine Blume ist schön, weil sie blühet unter der Sonne. Es findet das Aug' oft im Leben Wesen, die viel schöner noch zu nennen wären als die Blumen. O! ich weiß das wohl!

Yet these images are so simple, so very holy are these, that really often one is afraid to describe them. But the Heavenly, who are always good, all things at once, like the rich, have these, virtue and pleasure. This men may imitate. May, when life is all hardship, may a man look up and say: I too would like to resemble these? Yes. As long as Kindliness, which is pure, remains in his heart not unhappily a man may compare himself with the divinity. Is God unknown? Is He manifest as the sky? This rather I believe. It is the measure of man. Full of acquirements, but poetically man dwells on this earth. But the darkness of night with all the stars is not purer, if I could put it like that, than man, who is called the image of God.

> Is there a measure on earth? There is none. For never the Creator's worlds constrict the progress of thunder. A flower too is beautiful, because it blooms under the sun. Often in life the eye discovers beings that could be called much more beautiful still than flowers. Oh, how well I know it!
>
> (Hamburger 600-01)

In his introduction to *Poetry, Language, Thought*, which includes Heidegger's essay ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . .," Hofstader argues that Heidegger's conception of truth evolved from an initial sense of "the showing of beings in overtness," the ἀλήθεια articulated in the pre-Socratic fragments, to include the sense of a mutual "appropriation" of Being and beings. He bases this argument on an analysis of Heidegger's use of "*ereignen,*" which Heidegger traces etymologically not only to a "lighting" but to a proper fitness or proportion that comes as a result of a measuring:

> *Ereignen* comes to mean . . . the joint process by which the four of the fourfold [earth, sky, divinities, mortals] are able, first, to come out into the light and clearing of truth . . . and secondly, to exist in appropriation of and to each other, belonging together in the round dance of their being. . . . (xxi)

The Serene, Heidegger states in "Remembrance of the Poet," "allots each thing to that place of existence where by its nature it belongs, so that it may stand there in the brightness of the Serene, like a still light, proportionate to its own being" (*Existence and Being* 247). Mortals are those beings who recognize this dimension of existence.

In "The Way to Language" Heidegger personifies "appropriation," describing it as "what brings all present and absent beings each into their own from where they show themselves in what they are, and where they abide according to their kind" (*On the Way* 127). It is what "grants to mortals their abode within their nature, so that they may be capable of being those who speak" (*On the Way* 128). In ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . ." Hölderlin suggests it is in looking heavenward that mortals obtain their own measure, the "image of God," and Heidegger glosses by remarking that this "span" of earth to sky is the recognition that mortals are apportioned a "dwelling" in time and space: "The upward glance passes aloft toward the sky, and yet it remains below on the earth. The upward glance spans the between of sky and earth. This between is measured out for the dwelling of man" (*Poetry, Language* 220). Therefore, "the taking of measure is what is poetic in dwelling" (*Poetry, Language* 221). God is unknown yet manifest in the sky and everything that "blossoms" beneath it:

> [T]he poet calls all the brightness of the sights of the sky and every sound of its courses and breezes into the singing word and there makes them shine and ring.
>
> . . . In the familiar appearances the poet calls the alien as that to which the invisible imparts itself in order to remain what it is—unknown. (*Poetry, Language* 225)

When the poet writes, "In lovely blueness the steeple . . . blossoms," the dimension of dwelling has been marked out and apportioned from earth to sky and thus god to mortal. And this is speaking the truth because it is "*the disclosure of appropriation*"

(Hofstadter xxi). Just as he exhorted his fellow Germans not to make two separate realities of the Bodensee as a lake and the Bodensee as a dwelling of gods and mortals, Heidegger cautions against taking images as fanciful representations of the "merely" physical. Rather, images are the "*visible inclusions of the alien in the sight of the familiar*" (emphasis added) (*Poetry, Language* 226):

> Because poetry takes that mysterious measure, to wit, in the face of the sky, therefore it speaks in "images." . . . . The poetic saying of images gathers the brightness and sound of the heavenly appearances into one with the darkness and silence of what is alien. By such sights the god surprises us. In this strangeness he proclaims his unfaltering nearness. (*Poetry, Language* 226)

Heidegger had used Hölderlin's phrase ". . .poetically man dwells . . ." in an earlier lecture, "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry" (1936) as the last of five "pointers"—quotations from Hölderlin that he believed captured the essence of poetry. His commentary on this last "pointer" serves as a summary and conclusion to a cumulative argument based on the previous four:

THE FIVE POINTERS

1. Writing poetry: "That most innocent of all occupations." (III, 377.)

2. "Therefore has language, most dangerous of possessions, been given to man . . . so that he may affirm what he is. . . ." (IV, 246.)

3. "Much has man learnt.

   Many of the heavenly ones has he named,

   Since we have been a conversation

   And have been able to hear from one another." (IV, 343.)

4. But that which remains, is established by the poets. (IV, 63.)

5. "Full of merit, and yet poetically dwells

   Man on this earth." (VI, 25.) (*Existence and Being* 270)[50]

Pointer one is a quotation of a remark that Hölderlin made in a letter to his mother (*Existence and Being* 272). Heidegger interprets Hölderlin's comment ironically, but not before offering a persuasive defense of a straightforward reading:

> Writing poetry appears in the modest guise of *play*. Unfettered, it invents its world of images and remains immersed in the realm of the imagined. This play thus avoids the seriousness of decisions, which always in one way or another create guilt. Hence writing poetry is completely harmless. And at the same time it is ineffectual; since it remains mere saying and speaking. It has nothing about it of action, which grasps hold directly of the real world and alters it. Poetry is like a dream, and not real; a playing with words, and not the seriousness of action. Poetry is harmless and ineffectual. For what can be less dangerous than mere speech? (*Existence and Being* 272)

Here Heidegger sets forth a description of poetry as "play" that is strikingly similar to

Riffaterre's characterization of poetry as a verbal "game" and a "puzzle" (*Semiotics* 164-165). It is, however, this definition he ultimately rejects. This so-called poetry is the poetry of distraction and diversion, not reality. It exerts no influence; it is the least of the forms of language. Juxtaposed to this view is Heidegger's true estimation of poetry as the essence of language. In Pointer Two he quotes a fragment from Hölderlin: "Therefore has language, most dangerous of possessions, been given to man . . . so that he may affirm what he is . . . ." (*Existence and Being* 270). According to Heidegger, this fragment places language in the context of a gift from the gods to man as a special creation ("godlike" and "given the power to command and to accomplish") and this power, the power to make history, is volatile—simultaneously disruptive and creative (*Existence and Being* 273). Even more importantly, according to Heidegger, is Hölderlin's insight that language is dangerous to itself. Language manifests Being while preserving it, that is, allowing it to remain concealed, but the perception of that manifestation is always in danger of being lost in ordinary speech. It may become instrumental, something that is used as a thing at hand, because "[i]n it [language], what is purest and what is most concealed, and likewise what is complex and ordinary, can be expressed in words" (*Existence and Being* 275). This is not to say that using language is not necessary to historical existence: "Even the essential word, if it is to be understood and so become a possession in common, must make itself ordinary" (*Existence and Being* 275). But, as equipment or tool, language runs the supreme risk of being forgotten in its primary function as "that event which disposes of the supreme possibility of existence" (*Existence and Being* 276-77). To the poet is given the task of preserving language (bringing its essence to remembrance): "[T]he poet also uses

the word—not, however, like ordinary speakers and writers who have to use them up, but rather in such a way that the word only now becomes and remains truly a word" (*Poetry, Language* 48).

In his "Celebration of Peace," Hölderlin calls humanity a "conversation" 'Gesprach,' demonstrating for Heidegger that language must be considered an essential characteristic of what it is to be human.[51]

> Much has man learnt.
>
> Many of the heavenly ones has he named,
>
> Since we have been a conversation
>
> And have been able to hear from one another. (*Existence and Being* 277)

The nature of conversation as dialogue, both to listen/hear and say/speak, is such that it presupposes a ground of unity (*Existence and Being* 277-78). Conversation is the locus of language that makes possible learning and "the naming of the gods," which for Heidegger is a response to their claim regarding us, namely, that we bear the responsibility that language bestows for good or evil, openness to Being or forgetfulness of it. It follows, then, that it is the calling of the poet to preserve language as a conversation, a dialogue that induces the memory of Being. Poetry, therefore, "is the establishing of being by means of the word"; as pointer four states, "But that which remains, is established by the poets" (*Existence and Being* 280).

Heidegger's argument, then, to this point: Poetry only appears to be a most innocent work; as the essence of language, it is actually a most dangerous activity. It comes to humans and establishes the world by apportioning gods and beings their place in

the storms of history, even as it runs the risk of being forgotten—used merely as a tool. To avoid this loss, language must be maintained in its essential form of a conversation that calls together and names all of the elements integral to gods and heaven, earth and mortals: "Since language became actual as conversation, the gods have acquired names and a world has appeared" (*Existence and Being* 279). Poets perform this sacred service; they measure out the world in word, both revealing and keeping concealed the mystery of Being. "If," Heidegger observes, "we conceive this essence of poetry as the establishing of being by means of the word, then we can have some inkling of the truth of that saying [pointer four] which Hölderlin spoke long after he had been received into the protection of the night of lunacy" (*Existence and Being* 282).[52] It follows for Heidegger that if recognition and acknowledgment of the gods, human existence and history, and the establishment of the earth as world derive from language, then "our existence is fundamentally poetic" (*Existence and Being* 283).

Heidegger does make a final observation about a sense in which writing poetry involves a kind of innocence (*Existence and Being* 286). Poets, cast out "into that Between, between gods and men," because they appear to be engaging in useless child's play, inadvertently are protected from and innocent of what "afflicts and enflames man in his existence" in everyday life (*Existence and Being* 288, 275). Yet, he concludes,

unbeknownst to the many, the "play" of poets sustains existence, to the extent that what is condescendingly called "fancy" is reality:

> Poetry looks like a game and yet it is not. . . . [It] rouses the appearance

> of the unreal and of dream in the face of the palpable and clamorous reality, in which we believe ourselves at home. And yet in just the reverse manner, what the poet says and undertakes to be, is the real.
>
> (*Existence and Being* 286)

Pindar and Heidegger's "Fourfold"

Heidegger describes the very nature of language as "the movement of the face-to-face encounter of the world's four regions" (*On the Way* 107). When these four regions appropriate one another in the dance of time and space, humans "dwell" poetically. That this reality *is* the dwelling of humans, Heidegger articulates at length in "Building Dwelling Thinking" ["*Bauen Wohnen Denken*"] in a liturgy of the "*primal* oneness" of the world: earth, sky, divinities, and mortals (*Poetry, Language* 149).[53] Earth is "the serving bearer, blossoming and fruiting . . ."; sky is "the vaulting path of the sun, . . . the year's seasons and their changes, the clemency and inclemency of the weather. . ."; divinities are "the beckoning messengers of the godhead"; and mortals are human beings, who are called mortals because they are "capable of death as death." Each of these "definitions" is followed by the chorus, "When we speak of ["the earth" "the sky" "the divinities" "mortals"], we are already thinking of the other three along with it [them], but we give no thought to the simple oneness of the four" (*Poetry, Language* 149-50).

Of the Greek lyric poets, Pindar is closest to this sacramental approach to the relationships between gods, mortals, and the world. The structure of Pindar's odes depends on his perception of a similarly proper and apportioned relationship between earth and heaven, gods and mortals. In his introduction to the Loeb edition of Pindar (1961),

John Sandys notes that the odes generally follow a pattern of 1) offering praises to the god in whose name the games were held; 2) extolling the excellence of the victor and his home (city/country and relatives); and 3) retelling a myth (which becomes the ode's centerpiece) that expresses an integral relationship between the victor, his ancestors and ancestral home, and the gods (xxi, xxxi). In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger acknowledges that for Pindar, "to glorify was the essence of poetry" (87). He relates this glorification to the *doxa theou* in Greek and New Testament theology that connotes a beholding of "grandeur," and which, in the Greek *doxa* [aspect, regard] meant (if the aspect disclosed if of the highest order) "to place in the light and thus endow with permanence, being" (87). Being is, in turn, the "fundamental attribute of the noble individual and of nobility" as in Pindar's advice to Hieron, "γένοι' οἷς ἐσσὶ μαθών·," [now that thou hast learnt what manner of man thou art] (Pythian Ode II, 72). Heidegger translates this phrase as "Mayest thou by learning come forth as what thou art," which for him means that "coming forth" is an "appearing" that must take place by virtue of "standing-in-the-light" (*Introduction to Metaphysics* 86). Light, in this instance, is important because of its "inner connection" to Being and being-there, a connection that is established by the ancient Greek radicals for *being* and *light*, ΦΥ΄Ω and ΦΆΩ, which, according to Heidegger, are equivalent: "The radicals *phy* and *pha* name the same thing. *Phyein*, self-sufficient emergence, is *phainesthai*, to flare up, to show itself, to appear" (*Introduction to Metaphysics* 85). If the essence of poetry is to glorify, the calling of the poet is "to place in the light" (*Introduction to Metaphysics* 87).

Pindar's Olympian Ode IX, written in three stanzas (each consisting of strophe, antistrophe, and epode), can serve as an example of this lighting/glorifying that brings an individual, and thus his location in both time and place, to being. The first stanza begins with praise to Zeus, "the Lord of the ruddy lightning," then (in the antistrophe) to the victor (Epharmostus the wrestler) and his city, the "famous Opûs." The city's history is lauded right through to the epode, where Pindar observes, "Lo! I am lighting up that city dear with dazzling songs of praise, . . ." [ἐγὼ δέ τοι φίλαν πόλιν / μαλεραῖς ἐπιφλέγων ἀοιδαῖς] (21-22). The epode ends with an acknowledgment of the role the gods play in the destiny of all mortals, including his own: "I, by the ordering of destiny, am tilling the choicest garden of the Graces, for 'tis they that are givers of delight, but men become brave and wise according unto fate divine" [εἰ σύν τινι μοιριδίῳ παλάμᾳ / ἐξαίρετον Χαρίτων νέμομαι κᾶπον· / κεῖναι γὰρ ὥπασαν τὰ τέρπν' · ἀγαθοὶ δὲ καὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ δαίμον' ἄνδρες] (26-28). That acknowledgment serves as a transition in the second stanza to the legend of Heracles' defense of Pylos against Poseidon. It is unthinkable, Pindar contends, that Heracles would have had the courage to withstand "the trident" on that occasion without divine intervention—so unthinkable that he begins the antistrophe by cautioning himself against blasphemy: "Babble not, my Muse, of such themes as these;" [μανίαισιν ὑποκρέκει. / μή νῦν λαλάγει τὰ τοιαῦτ' ·] (39-40) and he returns quickly to a genealogy of the victor's city of Opûs.

Pindar's history of Opûs begins with a passing reference to the legend of Pyrrha and Deucalion, who, by order of Zeus, were supposed to have founded the city of Protogeneia [Πρωτογενείᾳ] by fashioning its populace out of stones. In the epode,

however, Pindar offers his own account, a "new song" that traces the ancestry of the founder of the city of Opûs from survivors of the Deluge to an evolving race of kings, and finally, in the strophe of the third stanza, to Protogeneia, the daughter of an original King Opûs. Her lineage is then elevated to that of Zeus himself, who having stolen her away, "lay by her side in a silent spot amid the Maenalian mountains" [πρὶν' Ολύμπριος ἀγεμὼν / θύγατρ' ἀπὸ γᾶς 'Επειῶν 'Οπόεντος ἀναρπάσαις, ἔκαλος / μίχθη Μαιναλίαισιν ἐν δειραῖς, . . .] (57-59). Pindar insists that this was an act of kindness on the part of Zeus, who wished that Locrus, Protogeneia's husband, would not remain childless: "that so Time might not destroy him, laying upon him the doom of childlessness" [μὴ καθέλοι μιν αἰὼν πότμον ἐφάψαις / ὀρφανὸν γενεᾶς] (60-61). Locrus, for his part, "rejoiced," and gave his son a city, Opûs, which subsequently flourished. In fact, in the antistrophe we read that Achilles' friend, Patroclus, was among the many and noble settlers in Opûs. This most famous of friendships forms the transition from the epode to the last stanza. In the epode, Pindar asks his Muse for one more grace, which is to sing the praises of another pair of friends, Epharmostus and fellow-citizen Lampromachus, for their victories in the same Isthmian games, and for Lampromachus' solo victories at various other contests. The antistrophe also is a final summary of all of Epharmostus's victories, although in typical fashion Pindar reminds his listeners that in any case, mere human effort is insufficient for success: "[M]any men have striven to win their fame by means of merit that cometh from mere training; but anything whatsoever, in which God hath no part, is none the worse for being quelled in silence" [τὸ δὲ φυᾷ κράτιστον

ἅπαν· πολλοὶ δὲ διδακταῖς / ἀνθρώπων ἀρεταῖς κλεος / ὄρουσαν ἀρέσθαι] (100-104). In this regard, Heidegger calls attention, in his discussion of the equivalence of *to be* and *to appear*, to a phrase in the immediately preceding line: "That which cometh of Nature is ever best." [τὸ δὲ φυᾷ κράτιστον ἅπαν.] Heidegger translates the phrase, "that which is through and from out of *phya* is the mightiest of all," and contends that for Pindar, "*phya* was the fundamental determination of man's being-there" (*Introduction to Metaphysics* 86). In the final epode, Pindar affirms that Epharmostus indeed had obtained the "blessing of heaven" '*τόνδ' ἀνέρα δαιμονία*' (109).

In Heidegger's terms, Pindar has taken the measure of earth and sky, gods and mortals and established them as a world in which humans "poetically dwell." For the listeners, the world steps forward into the open as what it is. The poet's revelation, then, is not a commentary upon what the world *might* be—but what it actually *is*—a "round dance" of the fourfold, in which there takes place "the sublimely simple play of their [the four-fold's] mirroring" (Hofstader xxi). Hölderlin wrote in 1804, "At present I am especially occupied with the fable, the poetic view of history, and the architectonics of the skies, especially of our nation's, so far as it differs from the Greek" (qtd. in *Poetry, Language* 227). Heidegger places this quotation in the context of contending that poetic dwelling is in real time and space:

> Man does not dwell in that he merely establishes his stay on the earth beneath the sky, by raising growing things and simultaneously raising buildings. Man is capable of such building only if he already builds in the sense of the poetic taking of measure. Authentic building occurs so far as

> there are poets, such poets as take the measure for architecture, the structure of dwelling. (*Poetry, Language* 227)

Naming as Waking the Monster

Heidegger suggests in "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry" that poetry is the essence of language itself:

> [P]oetry is the inaugural naming of being and of the essence of all things—not just any speech, but that particular kind which for the first time brings into the open all that we then discuss and deal with in everyday language. Hence poetry never takes language as a raw material ready to hand, rather it is poetry which first makes language possible. (*Existence and Being* 283)

Whatever a poem might bring into the open, however, runs the risk of being shut up by gradual conversion into "everyday language." He observes in his lecture, "Language," that "What is purely hidden in mortal speech is what is spoken in the poem. Poetry proper is never merely a higher mode (*melos*) of everyday language. It is rather the reverse: everyday language is a forgotten and therefore used-up poem, from which there hardly resounds a call any longer" (*Poetry, Language* 208). He was perhaps reminding us that any reading of a poem is another poem. For his part, Heidegger could only go so far as to say that "we cannot here decide flatly whether poetry is really a kind of thinking, or thinking really a kind of poetry. It remains dark to us what determines their real relation, and from what source that we so casually call the 'real' really comes" (*On the Way* 83).

Or, as Hölderlin expressed it:

Kommt eine Fremdlingin sie

Zu uns, die Erwekerin,

Die menschenbildende Stimme.

A stranger it comes

To us, that quickening word,

The voice that moulds and makes human. ("At the Source" 385, 2.1-3)

To give face to something is to name it—to demarcate its form as one separate from others: "This naming does not consist merely in something already known being supplied with a name; it is rather that when the poet speaks the essential word, the existent thing is by naming nominated as what it is. So it becomes known *as* existent" (*Existence and Being* 281).[54] Paul De Man compares this naming to invoking a monster—the "visual shape of something that has no sensory existence: a hallucination" that is made "so eminently visible that any reader must respond to it" (49). Perhaps that is why Heidegger refers without further comment to Hölderlin's "Homecoming" as a "monstrous poem" (*Existence and Being* 282). And in "To Hope," Hölderlin writes,

O du des Aethers Tochter! erscheine dann

Aus deines Vaters Gärten, und darfst du nicht

Ein Geist der Erde, kommen, schrök', o

Schröke mit anderem nur das Herz mir.

Then come, O Aether's daughter, appear to me

Out of your father's gardens; and if you may

Not wear the shape of earthly spirits,

Frighten my heart with a different aspect. (Hamburger 195)

CHAPTER V

MEDIATING SEMIOTICS AND SEMANTICS IN POETRY: METAPHOR, REFERENCE, AND PROSOPOPEIA

"The affirmation of the opacity of poetic discourse and its corollary, the obliteration of ordinary reference, are merely the starting-point of an immense inquiry on the topic of reference . . . ." —Paul Ricoeur

In his essay "Heidegger's Exegeses of Hölderlin," Paul de Man argues that the question of whether or not Heidegger's appropriation of Hölderlin's poetry actually advanced Hölderlin studies must be subsumed under the larger question regarding Heidegger's "exegetical" method (246). Of course, characterizing Heidegger's approach to Hölderlin as "exegesis" prefigures for de Man an assessment of Heidegger's work as commentary on sacred text rather than as literary criticism. And de Man does contend that, rather than the groundwork for an overall approach to aesthetics, Heidegger's exegesis of Hölderlin is better characterized as part of a general quest for an adequate ontology (246-47).

In support of this argument, de Man first notes that Hölderlin has become notorious among philologists for the number of extant revisions of his poems.[55] The problem of which revision to regard as authoritative is exacerbated in Heidegger, who

generally does not defend his choices among variant texts or comment on other critical interpretations. He examines lines, phrases, and even words in isolation and without context, bases some of his word studies on apocryphal texts, and uses without comment texts from Hölderlin's so-called mad period (de Man 249-50). Most important, however, according to de Man, is that Heidegger's interpretations of Hölderlin are founded on "a notion of the poetic that seeks to assert the fundamental impossibility of applying objective discourse to a work of art" (249). According to de Man, what qualifies as a work of art for Heidegger is that which can reveal what is in essence not capable of revelation. Although this language of paradox is to be expected from mystics, de Man claims that it constitutes a logical contradiction in Heidegger's supposedly philosophical method that ultimately vitiates his attempt to link language and ontology (260).

De Man first likens Heidegger's estimate of Hölderlin as the "meta-metaphysician" who can speak and thereby reveal Being, to Hegel's utopian vision of the philosopher who has arrived at the end of the dialectic of Absolute Spirit (250-51). Alternatively, he frames Heidegger's approach to Hölderlin as an apocryphal quest for the "parousia of Being" that ushers Being into presence in poetry by naming it as it reveals itself. The poet is the one who can assure us that there is indeed a ground of being in Being. This is evident, for example, in Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin's dictum "*Was bleibet aber stiften die Dichter*" [But what remains, is founded by the poets] as a foundation for the "immediate presence of Being" (251-52). Heidegger himself was reticent about stating whether or not he himself had experienced original Being; he was at any rate convinced that the role of the philosopher was not to reveal (something of which discourse must be deemed

incapable of doing) but to listen and preserve a testimony of revelation. Hölderlin's role as poet, on the other hand, was to speak the revelation:

> Hölderlin [according to Heidegger] knows Being immediately and he says it immediately; the commentator need only know how to listen. The work is there, itself a parousia. Being speaks through Hölderlin's mouth as God did through the mouth of the seer Calchas in the *Iliad.* (de Man 253)

According to de Man, this relationship of prophet to disciple reduces Heidegger's "criticism" of Hölderlin to commentary: "With Holderlin, there never is any critical dialogue [on Heidegger's part]" (253). Heidegger's *an-denken* [sic] "thinking-of" is a thinking-with or thinking-alongside that does not question; rather, it may on occasion successfully recover the wonder of Being and share with others what it means to "dwell poetically on earth" (254).

It is on this point that de Man criticizes Heidegger most severely. Hölderlin, de Man argues, actually "*says* [in his poetry] *exactly the opposite of what Heidegger makes him say*"; that is, the characteristic note of Hölderlin's work is not one of revelation but of lamentation over the impossibility of revelation. Hölderlin does not claim to reveal what he has become, having ventured into the realm of Being—he can only intend it: "It is not because he has seen Being that the poet is, therefore, capable of naming it; his word prays for the parousia, it does not establish it" (258). De Man claims that Heidegger's attempt to ameliorate this problem by arguing that language, although it does *mediate* the immediate in the poem, does not actually *reveal* the immediate is a contradiction. To insist on "showing the poet as naming the presence of the present," despite the poet's frequent

protestations, is to conflate language, that which merely announces the hope of revelation, with revelation itself, which is an experience of original Being. Hölderlin's "conception of the poetic," according to de Man, is that of "an essentially open and free act, a pure intuition, a mediated and conscious prayer that achieves self-consciousness in its failure; in short, a conception diametrically opposed to Heidegger's" (263).

There is a sense in which this critique of Heidegger—that he is overconfident of the capacity of language to articulate experience—is analogous to that argument (discussed in Chapter One) which de Man levels against Michael Riffaterre. De Man suggests that Riffaterre attempts to "escape the figural" by exhausting its expression in a rationale of semiotic analysis. This reduction would entail a movement downwards, so to speak, from apparently extraordinary expression to ordinary speech that is, in turn, reducible on structuralist principles, to scientific language. But according to de Man, there is no one descriptive linguistic system into which we can reduce all others; structuralism's naive retention of positivism as a philosophical presupposition reveals a lingering overconfidence in the ultimate transparency of language. Heidegger's error, on the other hand, stems from his desire to recover original experience in language. He therefore inflates the power of language (especially figural language) "upward," arrogating to it the capacity, in the poet, to presence Being, thereby identifying Being and language in a mystical manner that is self-contradictory and non-philosophical. Heidegger, therefore, is also seeking to "escape the figural" by convincing himself that the figural can transcend its own being-in-the-world, that being can be translated into Being by virtue of the "gift" of language.

De Man therefore rejects Heidegger's claim that language can mediate between the ineffable and the mundane; language always is already and only in the realm of the mundane. He concludes his essay by speculating nevertheless that "the encounter between these two possible attitudes could constitute the center of a valid poetics" (263). How could this be so?

> Any exegetical method will ultimately have to come to grips with the same problem: how to elaborate a language capable of dealing with the tension between the ineffable and the mediate. The ineffable demands the direct adherence and the blind and violent passion with which Heidegger treats his texts. Mediation, on the other hand, implies a reflection that tends toward a critical language as systematic and rigorous as possible, but not overly eager to make claims of certitude that it can substantiate only in the long run. (263)

It is not so obvious as de Man claims, however, that Heidegger turned Hölderlin's elegies into revelations; he was well aware of the poet's inability to make Being transparent. If there is a logical battle to be fought, it is on the ground of figure as mediator. For Heidegger, the poet's word "figures" both as disclosure and closure. If we protest that it cannot be both, Heidegger will claim we have begged the question. For example, de Man sets up an opposition between what can and cannot be expressed in language. Rather than between true opposites, however, such as the ineffable (something about which nothing can be uttered) and the utterable, his opposite terms are

"the ineffable" and "the mediate." He already has defined, however, the "mediate" as language and therefore assumes what he sets out to prove.

Heidegger's question is whether or not figure pre-figures discourse in such a way that when we "listen to the poet," we hear language as the ground of discourse. De Man observes that "[f]or the poet the anguishing question . . . is: how can one not only speak of Being, but say Being itself. Poetry is the experience of this question." But poetry is not only the experience of this question; we know it is poetry only when we hear it speak the question. When it speaks the question, Heidegger would contend, it says Being. It is the philosopher who is left to "think with" the poet and then carefully to preserve thought in order to "dwell poetically."

Paul Ricoeur and the Mediating Role of Metaphor

For Heidegger, language could be said to act as mediator between Being [*Sein*] and being [*das Seiende*]. How does it do so? One possibility, according to Paul Ricoeur, is through metaphor, conceived of not as a simple trope of resemblance and substitution (as in semiotics) but as semantic innovation, the production of meaning in discourse. In a sequence of studies in *The Rule of Metaphor* that outlines the function of metaphor from word to sentence to text, Ricoeur attempts a careful negotiation between semiotics and semantics.[56] He tries first to demonstrate that metaphor produces a simultaneous effect on signification (at the level of word) and meaning (at the level of the sentence). He then applies this finding to a critique of the status of literary language (especially within the genre of poetry) and its distinction, if any, from philosophical language. In a literary work, he argues, metaphor alerts the reader to a bifurcation of reference, one of which is, in fact,

a "redescription" of the world that is cognitive, that is, it conveys new information or knowledge about reality. Ultimately, he concludes that this capacity of language to deploy metaphor as a "semantic innovation" lays the groundwork for concepts subsequently taken up in philosophy.

Metaphor as "semantic innovation"

The notion of metaphor as a word that improves style by "standing in" for a properly denotative, but uninteresting, word is familiar enough. Treating metaphor as substitution or deviation from the norm implies that the "proper" name always can be restored or paraphrased; therefore, "[t]he algebraic sum of substitution and subsequent restitution is zero" (Ricoeur 45-46). As such, no new information is conveyed; the trope remains a matter of style. In *Rhetoric* 1410b 13-15, however, Aristotle states that "when the poet calls old age 'a withered stalk' he conveys a new idea [literally: he has produced a knowledge] [*epoiese mathesin kai gnosin*], a new fact to us by means of the general notion [*dia tou genous*] of "lost bloom . . ." (qtd. in Ricoeur 26).[57] The poet has set up a proportional relationship of genus to species that states that the general concept of "old age" is to "an old person" as the general concept of "lost bloom" is to "a withered stalk." The two species are then transposed so that "a withered stalk" comes under the general concept of "old age."[58] This "taking one thing for another by a sort of calculated error" may be a violation of the logical order, but it is intended to establish a new point of view—to redescribe the world: "Thus," Ricoeur claims, "the category-mistake is the de-constructive intermediary phase between description and rediscription" (21, 22). He speculates that this may be in fact the way that thought forges the concept of genus:

> A family resemblance first brings individuals together before the rule of a logical class dominates them. Metaphor, a figure of speech, presents in an *open* fashion, by means of a conflict *between* identity and difference, the process that, in a *covert* manner, generates semantic grids by fusion of differences *into* identity. (198)

Recalling H.-G. Gadamer's comment in *Wahrheit und Methode* that there is a "'metaphoric' at work at the origin of logical thought, at the root of all classification," he suggests that when Aristotle employs metaphor as a verb (*metapherein*), he supports an idea of metaphor that acts by "creating rifts in the old order" (22-23).[59] Even at the level of individual word, metaphor as semantic innovation creates new rather than merely equivocal meaning.

Metaphor in the Context of the Sentence

Ricoeur notices that Pierre Fontanier, in his classic taxonomy of figures *Les Figures du discours*, makes a key distinction between "proper" and "improper" metaphor that relies on the notion of catechresis. Improper metaphor, or "figure-trope," occurs when there is a loss for words that results in a "forced" use of a name: "*In general, catachresis refers to a situation in which a sign, already assigned to a first idea, is assigned also to a new idea, this latter idea having no sign at all or no other proper sign within the language*" (qtd. in Ricoeur 62). Aristotle, Ricoeur also notes, already had used the figure *epiphora* to describe this use of metaphor; it implies filling a "semantic lacuna" with a word for which no truly "natural" name has been yet discovered (19, 20).[60] By virtue of this denotative invention, according to Ricoeur, metaphor impacts not only a

word but (simultaneously) the sentence as a whole because it is the sentence, not the word, that functions as the basic semantic unit of language. He therefore takes as his "working hypothesis" that "the semantics of discourse is not reducible to the semiotics of lexical entities" (66).[61]

Making a distinction between influences at the level of the word and level of the sentence helps to distinguish between sense and reference as well, since we may say that "signs refer to other signs *within* the same system. In the phenomenon of the sentence, language passes outside itself; reference is the mark of the self-transcendence of language" (74).[62] At the level of the sentence, semiotics, or the "intra-linguistic relationship," is superseded by the intention to refer. Alluding to Husserl's analysis of intentionality, Ricoeur affirms that "[L]anguage is intentional *par excellence*; it aims beyond itself, so that it is the intended, not the signified, whose reach goes outside language" (74).[63] In this sense, all metaphors are, on first use, "improper" in Fontanier's sense; they transgress the linguistic code in order to denote at a level that transcends intra-textual signification.

When a metaphor is created, it emerges as a meaningful *event*; it is said to be "alive." When its meaning eventually is accepted into general usage and lexicalized, it "dies." Ricoeur calls this the "circle" of language and speech, a term he derives from Roman Jakobson's analysis of the "interchange" between code and message in the essay "Linguistics," where Jakobson states that "without a confrontation of the code with the messages, no insight into the creative power of language can be achieved" (qtd. in Ricoeur 121). Ricoeur takes Jakobson to mean that language exists as a polysemy that is continually evolving with the introduction of new metaphors in speech, which are in turn

taken up in common usage and eventually become embedded in the original matrix of language (121).

Ferdinand de Saussure's traditional "disjunction" between sign and thing therefore becomes problematic "because discourse, through its referential function, sets signs fully into relation with things. Denotation is a sign-thing relation, whereas signification is a relation between signifier and signfiied" (123).[64] The question is therefore whether or not an analysis of the code, even at the level of the sentence, can be separated from an interpretation of its message.

> In a certain discourse situation, in a given social milieu and at a precise moment, something seeks to be said that demands an operation of speech, speech working on language, that brings words and things face to face. The final outcome is a new description of the universe of representations. (Ricoeur 125)

Metaphor as substitution involves a semiotic analysis whereas metaphor as "new pertinence" requires a semantic analysis: "As a lexeme, the word [a metaphor] is a difference in the lexical code . . . As a part of discourse, it bears a part of the meaning that belongs to the entire statement" (157).[65]

Ricoeur's description of the relationship of metaphor to sentence is remarkably similar to Michael Riffaterre's analysis of the relationship between "ungrammaticality" and hypogram in the poem. Ricoeur (following Monroe Beardsley's general analysis of the figure) affirms that "a metaphorical word functions only when it is contrasted and combined with other non-metaphorical words . . . the self-contradiction of literal

interpretation is necessary for the unfolding of metaphorical interpretation" (138). On this account, "what the figure contrasts with is a literal interpretation of the sentence as a whole, the impossibility of which motivates the constitution of the metaphorical meaning" (139).

This process of reconstitution corresponds to Riffaterre's use of ungrammaticality as an heuristic that compels a second reading intended to capture the non-literal matrix of the text. Although Riffaterre calls this first reading of a poem "heuristic," it can only be so if the reader is already aware that for poetry, "decoding" can only take place as ungrammaticalities are noted and interpreted. The second reading, which he calls "retroactive" is thus the reading that employs the heuristic proper to poetry and, as he states, "This is the time for a second interpretation, for the truly *hermeneutic* reading" (Riffaterre 5). It is telling, however, that Riffaterre does not describe the second reading as a semiosis but instead uses the technical term for a process he ultimately is trying to avoid—interpretation. The result of Riffaterre's hermeneutics is nevertheless not so much an interpretation as a translation. He translates the poem into what Jean Cohen, in *Structure du language poétique* calls the "least marked" language—that of science, assuming that the essential characteristic of scientific language is that the translation of any other "language" into it is equivalent; it conveys "identity of information" (qtd. in Ricoeur 139). This accomplishes a "reduction of deviation" or "self-correction that re-establishes the integrity of the message" (159).

Cohen articulates this violation as a two-step process: "The totality of the procedure comprises two inverse and complementary phases—(1) situation of deviation:

impertinence; (2) reduction of deviation: metaphor" (qtd. in Ricoeur 152). More accurate, perhaps, is that the reduction itself consists of two steps. Transgression of lexical "law" does alarm the reader, who then reads again and recognizes the impertinence for what is—metaphor. This recognition, however, renders the deviation harmless; it reduces it to nothing because the meaning it lends to the sentence is, to the relief of the reader, equivalent to the meaning of an ordinary statement. The difference that the deviation seems to make is legitimately interpreted as affective or connotative. Cohen may argue that "impertinence" as deviation does indeed yield a "new pertinence" that is unique to poetic language. But for him this new pertinence is "harmless" in the sense that it is non-cognitive: "emotional unity is the obverse side of notional inconsequence" (qtd in Ricoeur 155). What Ricoeur calls the "semiotic postulate" for metaphor, because it is so generally held, is that there is an equivalency between the transformation of deviation to reduction back to deviation (157). The same can be said for Riffaterre's sense of the translatability of the text of the poem into ordinary language.

Ricoeur argues that this cognitive/non-cognitive distinction made by Cohen and others has been assumed to correspond to the traditional difference recognized between denotation and connotation, but that "the properly positivistic presupposition according to which only the objective language of scientific prose would be able to denote . . . . is a prejudice that must be exposed to direct interrogation" (148). A figure is understood to be so only in the context of a sentence-statement that refers; metaphor must therefore pass beyond simple substitution and a semiotics of the word. According to Ricoeur, this means that "what is *intended* by discourse [*l'intenté*], the correlate of the entire sentence, is

irreducible to what semiotics calls the signified, which is nothing but the counterpart of the signifier of a sign within a language code" (216).

For his part, Ricoeur concedes, like de Man, that "the merit of the [reductionist] method is undeniable" but doubts that a complete reduction is possible, especially when the simultaneous effects of metaphor at the level of word and sentence are recognized (140). Instead, Ricoeur argues that it is legitimate to ask what the metaphorical statement might say about the world. Insofar as a metaphor is inextricably linked to a sentence statement, it is involved in a predication (assigning a quality or qualities to a subject) which is the central function of semantics and the origin of communication. It must convey an intended adumbration of the subject that originates in an exterior world: "[G]rounded on the predicative act what is intended by discourse [*l'intenté*] points to an extra-linguistic reality which is its referent" (Ricoeur 216):

> The affirmation that the figure's surplus of meaning depends on connotation is the exact counterpart of the affirmation discussed earlier that the figure is translatable with regard to its sense—in other words that it carries no new information . . . But if metaphor is a statement, it is possible that this statement would be untranslatable, not only as regards its connotation, but as regards its very meaning, thus as regards its denotation. It teaches something, and so it contributes to the opening up and the discovery of a field of reality other than that which ordinary language lays bare. (148) [66]

Literary Text as Metaphor

For linguists generally, it is only what is not sublimated in a literary text that is denoted. What is left untranslatable in a text is wholly connotative and affective. Ricoeur nevertheless argues that just as in the case of the metaphorical statement, "it is entirely conceivable that the opacity of words [in a literary text] implies some *other* reference and not *no* reference at all" (146). He first invokes the analogy Beardsley makes in his *Aesthetics* between the literary work and the sentence, where both can be considered as a "unit of discourse." There are two levels of signification in a sentence, the explicit (what it states) and the implicit (what it suggests), and these are, in turn, analogous to the distinction we make between the denotation and connotation of individual words. Based on Beardsley's argument, "a semantic definition of literature—that is, a definition in terms of meaning—can be deduced from the degree to which a discourse involves implicit or suggested secondary meanings" (91).

Beardsley also articulates a difference between the "the world of the work," or "projection of a possible and intelligible world," and its verbal design. It is possible, when analyzing a work, to confine oneself to the verbal design, but "in spontaneous discourse, understanding does not stop at the sense, but passes by sense towards reference" (92). Ricoeur therefore offers a new formulation of literary reference: "[D]iscourse in the literary work sets out its denotation as a second-level denotation, by means of the suspension of the first-level denotation of discourse" (221). Poetry, either considered as typical of literary language in general or as a specific genre, does not exclude reference or abolish it but "splits" it: "[P]oetry is not the suppression of the referential function but its

profound alteration by the workings of ambiguity" (224). If, for modern critics, reference is destroyed in the literary work, this merely shows that the epistemology of logical positivism has been imported as a presupposition into this critical approach to literary language (226-27).

The Problem of Mimesis

Ricoeur's approach to mimesis becomes particularly important in his analysis of metaphor's role in sense and reference at the level of the work of art. Ricoeur contends that in Aristotle's elucidation of tragedy as the imitation of human action, metaphor plays a role larger than traditionally assigned. Aristotle conceives of metaphor, he contends, as part of the lexis, or ordering and organizing, of the mythos that is recalled in tragedy. As such, it actively participates in creating the mimesis of human action represented in the poem. Quoting Aristotle's comment in *Poetics* 1456 b 6, τὶ γὰρ ἂν εἴν τῶ λέψοντος ἔργον, εἰ φαγοῖτο ἢ δέοι καὶ μὴ διὰ τὸν λόγον; [What, indeed, would be the good of the speaker, if things appeared in the required light even apart from anything he says?] Ricoeur argues that lexis (and therefore the role that metaphor plays in producing it) makes possible "the coming *into* language, the fact of having been made manifest, of *appearing* in spoken words" (37). As an element of lexis, metaphor is no mere matter of style: "The subordination of *lexis* to *muthos* already puts metaphor at the service of 'saying,' of 'poetizing,' which takes place no longer at the level of the word but at the level of the poem as a whole" (40).

These observations prompt Ricoeur to clarify his understanding of the relationship between mimesis, lexis, and metaphor. The traditional interpretation of mimesis as

imitation, he argues, is more Platonic than Aristotelian. Plato's concept of "definition" implies a one-to-one correspondence between an idea and the word that "really" applies to it; everything else, therefore, is merely a resemblance (37-38). For Aristotle, however, mimesis is, like metaphor, an act. It is a "making," which, in tragedy, structures the plot (39). It is discursive rather than duplicative, which is what inspires Aristotle to state in *Poetics* 1451b5-6 that poetry is "something more scientific and serious than history, because poetry tends to give general truths while history gives particular facts" [ἡ μὲν γὰρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἡ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει.] (85). In the tragedy, mimesis is both faithful to human action (reality) and "original" in its structuring of the mythos to portray human action as more noble than or worse than the human behavior found in reality (Ricoeur 40).[67]

For Ricoeur, Aristotle's sense of art imitating nature is as much of a distinction as a relation because it distinguishes the poetic, a "making," from the organic, so that "reality remains a reference, without ever becoming a restriction" (42):

> If this hypothesis is valid, it can be understood why no *Poetics* can truly ever have done either with *mimêsis* or *phusis*. In the last analysis, the concept of *mimêsis* serves as an index of the discourse situation; it reminds us that no discourse ever suspends our belonging to a world. All *mimêsis*, even creative—nay, *especially* creative—*mimêsis*, takes place within the horizons of a being-in-the-world which it makes present to the precise extent that the *mimêsis* raises it to the level of *muthos*. (43)[68]

Ricoeur's conclusion is startlingly similar to Heidegger's plea for his countrymen to listen

to the poet's "saying" of Being not as merely symbolic but real or "actual." Ricoeur, too, asserts that "when the poet writes that 'nature' is 'a temple where living columns. . .,' the verb *to be* does not just connect the predicate *temple* to the subject *nature* . . . . It implies besides . . . that *what is* is redescribed; its says *that* things really are this way" (247-48). We may conclude, then, that 1) poetry "seeks to redescribe reality by the roundabout route of heuristic fiction"; 2) language uses metaphor to rise beyond direct description to the level of mythos; and 3) metaphorical truth is a consequence of the redescriptive power of language (247) (Fig. 9).

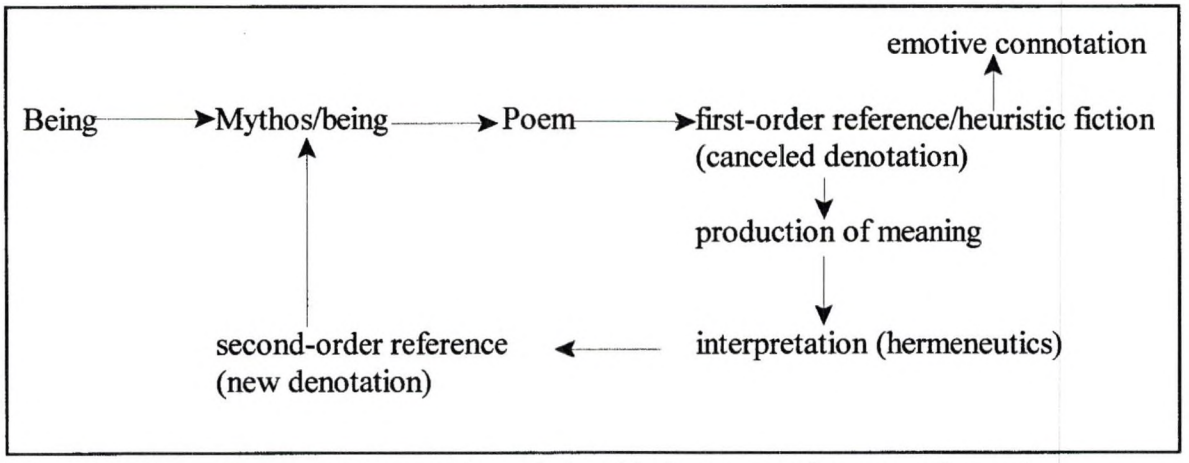

Figure 9. Ricoeur's proposed recursive relationship between reference and meaning.

According to the schema of Figure 9, Being is retained, as in Heidegger, as an unspoken category that is simultaneously revealed and not revealed when spoken by the poet. Mythos, already ensconced in the human life of "being-there," [*Dasein*] is ordered according to *logos* in the lexis and metaphor of the poem. As soon as the poem is recognized as fiction, its first-order reference is exploded, as it were, releasing a polysemous surplus that is both connotative (emotive) and meaningful. Meaning rise to the

level of a second-order (cognitive) reference to the encounter between Being and being that first compels the poet to speak. Thus, "in the metaphorical discourse of poetry referential power is linked to the eclipse of ordinary reference; the creation of heuristic fiction is the road to redescription; and reality brought to language unites manifestation and creation" (239).

Negotiating Poetry and Philosophy

We can now take up de Man's question about the relationship between "listening to the poet," and carrying out a philosophical project. Like Heidegger, Ricoeur seeks an ontology of discourse that would preserve the pluralism of modes of discourse and deny the reduction of philosophy into poetry. He observes, along with Heidegger, that

> the philosopher fights on two fronts, against the seduction of the ineffable and against the power of 'ordinary speech' (*Sprechen*), in order to arrive at a 'saying' (*Sagen*) that would be the triumph neither of inarticulateness nor of the signs available to the speaker and manipulated by him . . . . (310)

The poet uses language metaphorically to express the apperception of a new object of knowledge revealed in Being. The philosopher, alert to the deconstruction of reference and redescription of reality that language can intend, takes up this tension into thought. When taken up in self-reflection (philosophy), poetry becomes conscious of its relationship to Being. What the philosopher thus expresses in a separate mode of language is indeed a commentary on what has been heard by another—a bringing-to-bear of thought on language.

At the moment of "hearing," however, there occurs a disjunction between poet and philosopher that on the one hand ends communication with Being while providing the ground for concepts. Having heard, the philosopher cannot simply repeat, but attempts to stir up or re-awaken in other listeners what the poet has returned to memory. According to Ricoeur, "Philosophical discourse deliberately has recourse to living metaphor in order to draw out new meanings from some semantic impertinence and to bring to light new aspects of reality by means of semantic innovation" (291). Although philosophy must turn away from poetry towards discourse and, eventually, the merely instrumental use of language, it nevertheless must begin as an understanding of what is revealed by the poet, and it therefore originates in a shared matrix of second-order references. Its use of living metaphor cannot produce a concept; rather, living metaphor is the condition for the possibility of concepts: "What is given to thought in this way by the 'tensional' truth of poetry is the most primordial, most hidden dialectic—the dialectic that reigns between the experience of belonging as a whole and power of distanciation that opens up the space of speculative thought" (313).

As Ricoeur himself notes, onto-theology—the attempt to bridge the gap in language between the word of God and the word of humans—looks for a third term to do so: "This "human, too human, discourse of ontology attempts to respond to the entreaty of *another* discourse, which is itself perhaps only a non-discourse" (269). In the *analogia entis*, St. Thomas looked to "participation" as a way to preserve the sense of analogy of Being with beings and the notion of proportional being where the relationship between

terms is not mathematically determined, so that intellect is to soul as sight is to body (274). The criticism of this "too human" struggle has since culminated in the deconstructive criticism of Jacques Derrida and others, who claim that unacknowledged metaphor lies behind any metaphysical claim (284-287). De Man's criticism of Heidegger's exegeses presupposes this limit to thought and language. Heidegger, however, denies that in philosophy, hearing and seeing, for example, are used metaphorically in conjunction with grounding thought (280-81). It is rather the case that the hearing and seeing to which we commonly refer are known by virtue of a participation in or analogy with the apperception of Being. The "blossoming forth" of words in poetic language, as Heidegger proposes it, is intentional and metaphorical, but philosophy is at a critical distance from it; it must take up the metaphor into speculation to see how it qualifies as knowledge. Analogously, scientific thought requires a model in order to begin, before it uses logic in ordering, experiment, and verification:

> Concepts in scientific language as well as in ordinary language can never actually be derived from perception or from images, because the discontinuity of the levels of discourse is founded, at least virtually, by the very structure of the conceptual space in which meanings are inscribed when they draw away from the metaphorical process, which can be said to generate all semantic fields. (300)

The metaphor, too, is the initial opening up of the world for the understanding, even though its function is to speak both what is and what is not. The relationship of semiotics

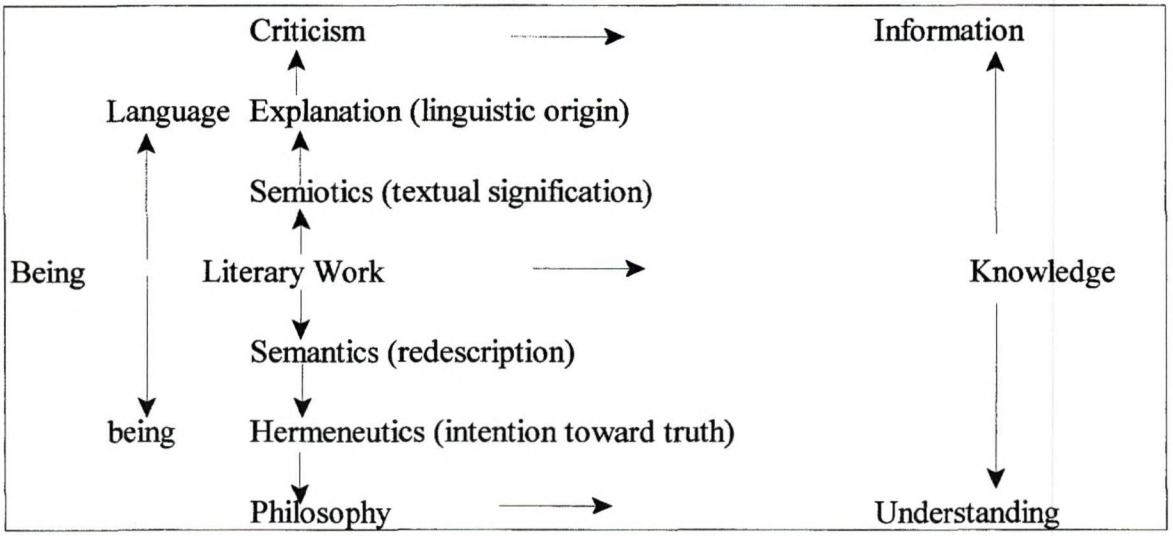

Figure 10. A model of the relationship between the literary work and knowledge based upon Heidegger and Ricoeur's analysis of literary language.

and semantics in literature is not so much a hierarchy as a division of labor. Borrowing from both Heidegger and Ricoeur, we could construct a model of approaches to literary language that preserves both realms of activity and investigation (Fig. 10).

Poetic Language and Lyric Poetry

For the most part, Ricoeur uses the terms poetry, poetic language, and literary language interchangeably. All of the genres, from his perspective, are characterized by the split reference that occurs in metaphorization. This common marker does not, however, collapse the genres nor even sub-genres into one category, although we also can say that the lines of distinction can not be firmly drawn; rather, the traditional divisions, first between types of poetry and then types of narrative, exist on a continuum (Fig. 10). The lyrical expression is a metaphorical statement that uses prosopopeia to set a stage, to provide a mask for, a hypothetical situation that redescribes the world in a way not attainable in an ordinary expression of emotion or in mere melody. The work comes

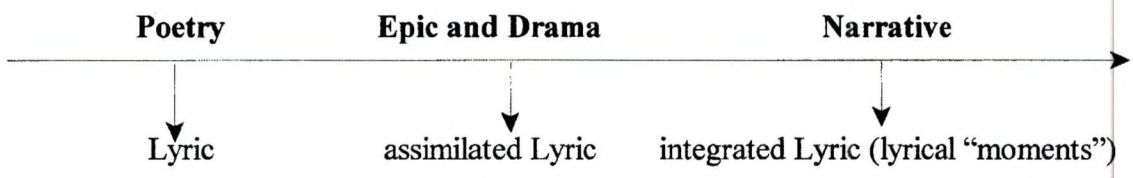

Figure 11. A model of literary language as a continuum of poetic language.

alongside experience to open up a new space previously not accessible to the poet or to the reader. As narrative claims a larger part of the production of a literary work, pure lyric becomes increasingly an element or constituent of a total effect rather than its framework; it nevertheless may remain the essence of a work, depending on the author's purpose.

Ricoeur does agree with critics such as Northrop Frye that the thrust of the lyric poem is to create a mood by the direct expression of emotion, pure and simple. He points out, however, that an "alternate" emotional world is a powerful form of redescription that can modify knowledge about the world in a most profound manner. As Ricoeur suggests, "feeling has an ontological status different from relationship at a distance; it makes for participation in things" (246).[69] Although its direct manner of expression makes it closely linked to the wordlessness of music, its "making" within the world of words makes it complicit with the play of *logos* on human experience. However musical, the lyric poem is a metaphorical statement that intends a truth about the world. It is perhaps the consciousness of this power that compels lyric poets to meditate upon poetry itself, at which point Lyric becomes self-conscious. Enter the philosopher, who listens and attempts the *andenken*, the "thinking with."

Epitaph and Epiphora

As we noted in Chapter One, the epigram written in the form of epitaph, although ostensibly referring to a dead person or persons through direct denotation by a name or specific description, quickly evokes an heuristic by which the reader participates in a ritual of reading that recognizes a variation on an ancient theme of statements about death and dying. By virtue of this semiotics of reading, epitaphs could in fact dispense with the material monument and become completely virtual, no longer written upon stone but upon the relative evanescence of papyrus or paper—and no longer dependent even upon someone in particular having died. The explanation of a given epitaph can, in this sense, be achieved quickly and completely—it is a catechresis achieved through expansion of a matrix of protestations against death. Anything added to this explanation is an interpretation of its meaning, even if we are quite sure (as Riffaterre seems to be, for example) that what we are dealing with is an intent to nullify death through a reprise, in the form of the epitaph, of its power to destroy. It could be that this is what the epitaph is teaching us, but to say so is to acknowledge that an explanation, and the interpretation that leads to understanding and knowledge, are inextricably linked to something that lies outside the text, namely, human experience. The epitaph therefore is certainly a verbal artifact, a construction, whose intertextual genealogy can be traced to an oral tradition of the funeral oration or *logos epitaphos* and to the earliest of death rituals. Even by the time of ancient Greece, "the world was old," as Mackail observes in the introduction to his anthology of the *Anthology*, adding:

> Then, no less than now, men trod daily over the ruins of old civilisations and the monuments of lost races. One of the most striking groups of poems in the Anthology is the long roll of the burdens of dead cities; Troy, Delos, Mycenae, Argos, Amphipolis, Corinth, Sparta. (66)

All of this has the effect of reducing the text to its kernel matrix, which, for the earliest humans, may have been only a cry of pain. Here, at the very origin of language, we face questions about the respective ontologies of emotion and intellect. Borrowing terms from Heidegger, we could ask whether a cry of pain, enlightened by the "gift" of language could "blossom forth" in a "saying" about human experience that is true not just in the sense of being an authentic expression of emotion but in terms of rendering a description of the world that is, indeed, true. For their part, the Greeks were, according to Mackail, the "sayers" of death, par excellence:

> Here [in the epitaph], if anywhere, the Greek genius had its fullest scope and most decisive triumph; and here it is that we come upon the epigram in its inmost essence and utmost perfection. "Waiting to see the end' as it always did, the Greek spirit pronounced upon the end when it came with a swiftness, a tact, a certitude that leave all other language behind. (68)[70]

Using Ricoeur's hermeneutic of metaphor, perhaps we can approach the sepuchral epigrams in particular in terms of epiphora, that is, as a movement or event of writing coming alongside the monument, real or imagined, to bring forth a redescription of the world. This redescription would have the potential to create a topology of human experience that is both new and cognitive—new because this particular emotional and

intellectual landscape has never before been made present, and cognitive because lexis, its ordering in *logos*, makes it cognizable as an objective description of the world of experience.

Mackail divides his selection of sepulchral epigrams (which, he notes, "would otherwise have been much the largest of the divisions,") into a section of "epitaphs proper" and a section entitled "Death," made up of epigrams "dealing with death generally" (31). He does not elucidate this criteria, but it seems that "epitaphs proper" are those which he suspects are the most simply stated of the epigrams, written on the occasion of specifically named people, and devoid of pronouncements, subtle or not, about the concept of death—those that deal with the species rather than the genus of death. Although the "death" epigrams may still be epitaphs for particular people, often what is foregrounded in the text itself is a commentary on the human condition. For example, Macedonius of Thessolonica, an epigrammatist of the Byzantine period, has the deceased wonder, in his or her death, about the purpose of life:

> Γαῖα καὶ Εἰλήθυια, σὺ μὲν τέκες, ἡ δε καλύπτεις·
> χαίρετον· ἀμφοτέρας ἤνυσα τὸ στάδιον·
> Εἶμι δέ, μὴ νοέων πόθι νείσομαι· οὐδὲ γὰρ ὑμέας
> ἢ τίνος, ἢ τίς ἐών, οἶδα πόθεν μετέβην.
>
> Earth and Birth-Goddess, thou who didst bear me and thou who coverest, farewell; I have accomplished the course between you, and I go, not discerning whither I shall travel; for I know not either whose or who I am, or whence I came to you. (11.1)

Yet many of the "death" epigrams do refer to specific people—famous warriors, a favored slave, a child, parent, or even a favorite pet. This epigram by Simonides (556-467), for example, is very specific, and although it makes a statement about the universal lot of all mortals, it is hardly distinguishable from what Mackail categorizes as epitaph:

Σῶμα μὲν ἀλλοδαπὴ κεύθει κόνις· ἐν δέ σε ποντῳ,
Κλείσθενες, Εὐξείνῳ μοῖρ' ἔκιχεν θανάτου
Πλαζόμενον, γλυκεροῦ δὲ μελίφρονος οἴκαδε νόστου
ἤμπλακες, οὐδ' ἵκευ Χῖον ἐπ' ἀμφιρύτην.

Strange dust covers thy body, and the lot of death took thee, O Cleisthenes, wandering in the Euxine [Black] Sea; and thou didst fail of sweet and dear home-coming, nor ever didst reach sea-girt Chios. (11.20)

Perhaps more often than not it is a heavy-handed use of metaphor, such as afflicts this epigram by Bianor, a Roman writer of the early first century CE, that renders, from Mackail's perspective, a "death" epigram more of a commentary on the inevitability of death than a simple epitaph.

Πάντα Χάρων ἄπληστε, τί τὸν νέον ἥρπασας αὖτως
Ἄτταλον; οὐ σὸς; ἔην, κἂν θάγε γηραλέος;

Ever insatiate Charon, why hast thou wantonly taken young Attalus? was he not thine, even if he had died old? (11.39)

The general tactic of accusing death for an unseemly eagerness to take possession of life is more effectively delivered by this anonymously written epigram, in which the writer "gives face" to the dead person, who then speaks directly to the reader:

Κάτθανον, ἀλλὰ μένω σε· μενεῖς δέ τε καὶ σύ τιν' ἄλλον·

Πάντας ὁμῶς θνητοὺς εἷς 'Αΐδης δέχεται.

I died, but I await thee; and thou too shalt await some one else; one Death receives all mortals alike. (11.52)

And Simonides achieves this same effect in a strangely doubled manner when he places his epigram in the context of a dramatic dialogue between father and son.

Φῆ ποτε Πρωτόμαχος, πατρὸς περὶ χεῖρας ἔχοντος,

ἡνίκ' ἀφ' ἱμερτὴν ἔπνεεν ἡλικίην·

Ὦ Τιμηνορίδη, παιδὸς φίλου οὔποτε λήσῃ

οὔτ' ἀρετὴν ποθέων οὔτε σαοφροσύνην.

Protomachus said, as his father held him in his hands when he was breathing away his lovely youth, 'O son of Timenor, thou wilt never forget thy dear son, nor cease to long for his valour and his wisdom.' (11.40)

Rather than invoking the dead to speak from the grave, Simonides embeds the dead person's last words in the epigram, creating a masque that would be a poignant one were it not for the sudden and inappropriate hubris with which it ends. We can understand it, nevertheless, as an epitaph that would be appreciated (and written) by a proud but grief-stricken father. This simultaneous memorialization of three generations is a "true" epitaph in Mackail's own sense of remembering, not death, but the person who died. More understated, however, is Simonides' epitaph celebrating the friendship between Theognis and Glaucus:

Σῆμα Θεόγνιδος εἰμὶ Σινωπέος, ᾧ μ' ἐπέθηκεν

Γλαῦκος ἑταιρείης ἀντὶ πολυχρονίου.

I am the monument of Theognis of Sinope, over whom Glaucus set me in guerdon of their long fellowship. (3.63)

Having the monument itself speak, rather than the deceased or Glaucus, the person who commissioned the monument, seems a gesture of humility, as if Glaucus were stepping discreetly to the side to point to the monument rather than call attention to himself as its builder. Yet the epitaph is clearly an epigram on fellowship, just as Brotachus's epitaph is an epigram on the fragility of life and unpredictability of death:

Κρὴς γενεὰν Βρόταχος Γορτύνιος ἐνθάδε κεῖμαι

οὐ κατὰ τοῦτ ἐλθών, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἐμπορίαν.

I Brotachus of Gortyna, a Cretan, lie here, not having come hither for this, but for traffic. (3.66)

Many of the epigrams, therefore, whether or not strictly classified as epitaphs by Mackail, express this general concept of humans' vulnerability and death's inevitability. In that sense they are reflexive, that is, they extrapolate a universal from a particular situation. They are a mimesis in Aristotle's sense of the actions of humans. But they are not self-conscious; there is no evidence that the inscriber is contemplating the vocation of the poet nor of that anxiety a poet might feel over the capacity of words to express the truth of the matter. On the contrary, there is a confidence apparent, even in the expressions of despair, that the articulation of emotion reifies it. In this sense the epigrams can be regarded as epiphora—metaphorical statements that open up a new topography of

human experience, that, were it not experienced through the *logos* of the poem, could not be experienced at all, much less articulated.

The development of the "technology" of the prosopopeiaic method marks in particular this arrival by poets at an unselfconscious approach to Being, the proposal of an "I-Thou" relationship. This relationship in turn establishes the ground for a second encounter with the reader. The Greek lyricists were confident that both encounters could issue in dialogues that were transparent–both in the particulars of speech about individuals (the record of history) and the extraction of concepts (the universality of human experience). They employed a variety of prosopopeiaic structures, including tableaus in which, for example,

- the dead (individually or in chorus; human or animal) speak
- the commemorator of an event speaks
- the mourner speaks
- the tomb speaks

Memorials to the famous comprise most of the first and second type, but there are many epitaphs spoken in the voice of the common person, such as this young wife and mother, who wishes she might have lived longer:

᾽Αρχέλεώ με δἀμαρτα Πολυξείνην, Θεοδέκτου
παῖδα καὶ αἰνοπαθοῦς ἔννεπε Δημαρέτης,
Ὅσσον ἐπ᾽ ὠδῖσιν καὶ μητέρα· παῖδα δὲ δαίμων
ἔφθασεν οὐδ᾽ αὐτῶν εἴκοσιν ἡελίων·

Ὀκτωκαιδεκέτις δ' αὐτὴ θάνον, ἄρτι τεκοῦσα,

ἄρτι δὲ καὶ νύμφη, παντολιγοχρόνιος.

Name me Polyxena wife of Archelaus, child of Theodectes and hapless Demarete, and a mother as far as the birth-pangs; but fate overtook the child before full twenty suns, and myself died at eighteen years, just a mother and just a bride, so brief was all my day. (3.49)

and this by an old man, who wished never to have been born.

Ἑξηκοντούτης Διονύσιος ἐνθάδε κεῖμαι

Ταρσεύς, μὴ γήμας· αἴθε δὲ μήδ' ὁ πατήρ.

I Dionysius of Tarsus lie here at sixty, having never married; and I would that my father had not. (3.65)

Even animals could be made to express themselves in this way, providing lighthearted guidance to weary travelers who happened upon the marker:

Δαμοκρίτῳ μὲν ἐγώ, λιγυρὰν ὅκα μοῦσαν ἀνείην

ἀκρὶς ἀπὸ πτερύγων, τὸν βαθὺν ἆγον ὕπνον·

Δαμόκριτος δ' ἐπ' ἐμοὶ τὸν ἐοικότα τύμβον, ὁδῖτα,

ἐγγύθεν Ὠρωποῦ χεῦεν ἀποφθιμένᾳ.

On Democritus would I the grasshopper draw deep sleep when I let loose shrill music from my wings; and Democritus over me when I was dead reared this fitting tomb, O wayfarer, nigh to Oropus. (3. 59)

According to Mackail, among the epigrams on death, losing one's life at sea was the type "upon which the art of the epigrammatist lavished its utmost resources":

> And death at sea had a great horror and anguish attached to it; the engulfing in darkness, the vain struggles for life, the loss of burial rites and all the last offices that can be paid to death, made it none the less terrible that is was so common. From the Odyssey downward tales of sea-peril and shipwreck had the most powerful fascination. (74-75)

Fourteen of the sixty-seven epigrams in his "Epitaph" section are on this theme and illustrate several prosopopeiaic structures. The first, in the voice of the tomb, creates a nice ambiguity in the meaning of "husbandman" by imagining the grave (metonymically, "death") as both the great leveler and that which finally compels everyone, sailor or farmer, to be a tiller of the earth:

> Ναυηγοῦ τάφος εἰμί· ὁ δ' ἀντίον ἐστὶ γεωργοῦ·
> ὡς ἁλὶ καὶ γαίῃ ξυνὸς ὕπεστ'' Αἴδης.
>
> I am the tomb of one shipwrecked; and that opposite me, of a husbandman; for a common Hades lies beneath sea and earth. (3.17)

On the other hand, some of these epitaphs simply wish fellow-mariners better luck, even registering at times a certain indifference toward death:

> Ναυηγοῦ τάφος εἰμί· σὺ δὲ πλέε· καὶ γάρ ὅθ' ἡμεῖς
> ὠλόμεθ', αἱ λοιπαὶ νῆες ἐποντοπόρουν.
>
> I am the tomb of one shipwrecked; but sail thou; for even while we perished, the other ships sailed on over the sea. (3.19)

Cheerful sentiments, however, are unusual; the overall theme, namely, the baleful insouciance of death itself, quickly returns. Callimachus (fl. 250-270), for example, writes:

Τίς ξένος, ὦ ναυηγέ Λεόντιχος ἐνθάδε νεκρὸν

εὗρεν ἐπ᾽ αἰγιαλούς, χῶσε δὲ τᾷδε τάφῳ

Δακρύσας ἐπίκηρον ἐὸν βίον· οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτὸς

ἥσυχος, αἰθυίῃ δ ἶσα θαλασσοπορεῖ.

What stranger, O shipwrecked man? Leontichus found me here a corpse on the shore, and heaped this tomb over me, with tears for his own calamitous life; for neither is he at peace, but flits like a gull over the sea. (3.22)

The strange form of address at the beginning of this epitaph has worried commentators, but Mackail assures us that, although "extremely elliptical," it is in keeping with Callimachus's style (363-64). It begins by addressing the person who died, then reverts suddenly to the more commonly used form of the dead person addressing the reader. The epitaph as a whole, however, is really not about the person who died nor about death at sea, but is rather a lament by Leontichus over his own misfortune. He feels himself dead while he lives, and this evokes his empathy for the shipwrecked victim, sorrow for his own life, and the apprehension that his own life, such as it is, will end as well in shipwreck, both literal and figurative.

This epitaph by Leonidas of Tarentum (3rd century C.E.), written in first-person, first narrates the tragedy-at-sea during which Callaeschrus drowned:

Εὕρου με τρηχεῖα καὶ αἰπήεσσα καταιγὶς

καὶ νύξ καὶ δνοφερῆς κύματα πανδυσίης

Ἔβλαψ᾽ Ὠρίωνος· ἀπώλισθον δὲ βίοιο

Κάλλαισχρος Λιβυκοῦ μέσσα θέων πελάγευς·

A rough and steep-down squall out of the East, and night, and the waves of the gloomy setting of Orion were my bane, and I Callaeschrus lost my hold of life as I sped through the mid Libyan sea;

He ends by implicating the empty tomb in a deceit practiced upon the reader:

Κἀγὼ μὲν πόντῳ δινεύμενος ἰχθύσι κῦρμα
ὀχλεῦμαι· φεύστησ δ' οὗτος ἔπεστι λίθος.

so I am rolled drifting in ocean, to be the prey of fishes, and this stone says falsely that it is over me. (3.26)

The reader already knows that an inscription does not refer in any case to a body lying within; the inscription always is doubly false. It nevertheless makes transparent the inscription's purpose, which is not to refer to a specific person but to make a metaphorical statement that refers to a world of experience. In Simonides' uncharacteristically lengthy treatment of the same idea, the drama of the tragedy also comes first, with just the last two lines again calling attention to the empty tomb.

Ἑρίη Γεράνεια, κακὸν λέπας, ὤφελες Ἴστρον
τῆλε καὶ ἐς Σκυθέων μακρὸν ὀρᾶν Τάναϊν
Μηδὲ πέλας ναίειν Σκειρωνικὸν οἶδμα θαλάσσης
ἄγκεα νιφομένας ἀμφὶ Μελουριάδος·
Νῦν δ' ὁ μὲν ἐν πόντῳ κρυερὸς νέκυς· οἱ δὲ βαρεῖαν
Ναυτιλίην κενεοὶ τῇδε βοῶσι τάφοι.

Cloudcapt Geraneia, cruel steep, would thou hadst looked on far Ister and long Scythian Tanaïs, and not lain nigh the surge of the Scironian sea by the ravines of the snowy Meluriad rock : but now he is a chill corpse in ocean, and the empty tomb here cries aloud of his heavy voyage. (3.24)

The speaker in this inscription first addresses the rocks upon which the sailor's ship foundered. Then, in a sudden turn, the speaker suggests that it is the tomb that tells this story and, in so doing, mourns. Simonides, however specific he makes his setting, does not name the deceased, and it is the mystery of the pronoun that heightens the absence of the deceased. Here, we do not even know who "he" is—just that a corpse now floats somewhere in the cold depths.[71] The empty tomb, however, has come alive by virtue of the inscription.

Prosopopeiaically Proposed Subjects

For both the epitaphs and "death" epigrams, whenever the speaker can not be identified explicitly as the mourner/writer, the reader quickly assumes that an object has been made capable of speech; it has become a subject/addressor (Table 1).

Table 1. Prosopopeiaic creation of virtual subject-addressor in the sepuchral epigram.

Object/addressor	Proposed Subject/addressor
Deceased (human or animal)	hypothetical deceased
Tomb/Monument	hypothesized speaker/person

Alternatively, the addressee often is an object (physical or mental) that is personified (Table 2).

Table 2. Prosopopeiaic creation of virtual subject/addressee in the sepuchral epigram.

Object addressed	Proposed Subject/addressee
deceased (human or animal)	deceased personified
concept of death	death personified
natural feature	nature personified
animal	animal personified
deity	god personified

In all cases, since the inscription is public, the reader is the always-intended addressee (Table 3).

Table 3. Encounter of writer and reader via prosopopeiaically constructed dialogue.

Subject/addressor	Proposed Subject/addressee	Intended Subject/addressee
Writer	deceased personified death personified object personified god personified	Reader

There also are combinations of these dialogic structures. This epitaph by Roman epigrammatist Diodorus, for example, is unusual in that it is a husband's defense, supposedly offered by his dead wife, against the rumour that he killed her:

Ἴστω νυκτὸς ἐμῆς ἅ με κέκρυφεν οἰκία ταῦτα
λάϊνα, Κωκυτοῦ τ' ἀμφιγόητον ὕδωρ,
Οὔτι μ' ἀνήρ, ὃ λέγουσι, κατέκτανεν ἐς γάμον ἄλλης
παπταίνων· τί μάτην οὔνομα Ῥουφίνιος;

Ἀλλά με Κῆρες ἄγουσι μεμορμέναι· οὐ μία δήπου

Παῦλα Ταραντίνη κάτθανεν ὠκύμορος.

Bear witness this my stone house of night that has hidden me, and the wail-circled water of Cocytus, my husband did not, as men say, kill me, his eyes set on marriage with another; why should Rufinius have an ill name idly? but my predestined Fates lead me away; not surely is Paula of Taretumn the only one who has died before her day. (3.47)

The category of the imagined dialogue also utilizes the same technique of address, but in the form of a dialogue that asks questions on behalf of the reader and then immediately offers the answer. The interrogator in Epitaph 3.62, for example, queries both the tomb and the deceased and provides their answers:

Ἦ ῥ' ὑπὸ σοὶ Χαρίδας ἀναπαύεται; εἰ τὸν Ἀρίμμα

τοῦ Κυρηναίου παῖδα λέγεις, ὑπ' ἐμοί.

Ὦ Χαρίδα, τί τὰ νέρθε; πολὺς σκότος. αἱ δ' ἄνοδοι τί;

φεῦδος. ὁ δὲ Πλούτων; μῦθος· ἀπωλόμεθα.

Does Charidas in truth sleep beneath thee? If thou meanest the son of Arimmas of Cyrene, beneath me. O Charidas, what of the under world? Great darkness. And what of the resurrection? A lie. and Pluto? A fable; we perish utterly. (3.62)

This form of epitaph becomes as well an interesting study in the cancellation of initial reference, since it is obvious that, if what it articulates is true, Charidas can not answer any inquiries. There is no ambiguity here, as there can be in epigrams that address the

deceased directly, about an empirical reference or reference to the world outside the poem; rather, outside reference is precluded by an explicitly stated philosophical position. In Ricoeur's sense, the epigram demonstrates an attempt, at least, to make metaphorical reference to a general state of affairs that either does or does not obtain in the world.

An Aesthetic of Thought and Figure

Mackail includes two epitaphs on the famous battle between the Greeks and the Persians at Thermopylae (481 B.C. E.) where three-hundred Spartans died fighting against an overwhelming Persian force. The first is a commemoration of the event by Parmenio, a first-century Roman writer:

> Τὸν γαίης καὶ πόντου ἀμειφθείσαισι κελεύθοις
>
> ναύτην ἠπείρου, πεζοπόρον πελάγους,
>
> Ἐν τρισσαῖς δοράτων ἑκατοντάσιν ἔστεγεν ἄρης
>
> Σπάρτης· αἰσχύνεσθ' οὔρεα καὶ πελάγη.
>
> Him, who over changed paths of earth and sea sailed on the mainland and went afoot upon the deep, Spartan valour held back on three hundred spears; be ashamed, O mountains and seas. (3.3)

The second is by Simonides:

> Ὦ ξεῖν, ἄγγελον Λακεδαιμονίοις ὅτι τῇδε
>
> κείμεθα τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι.
>
> O passer by, tell the Lacedaemonians that we lie here obeying their orders. (3.4)

Parmenio celebrates the event by first alluding, via metaphor, to Xerxes' herculean achievement of crossing the Hellespont on pontoons and digging a canal across the Athos peninsula. Additional figures ("valour" that "held back" the Persians, and the metonymy of "three hundred spears," to represent the Spartan army) contrast that accomplishment with the miracle of the Spartans' defense. He heightens his attribution of honor to the Spartans by addressing two natural features that traditionally had prevented a successful invasion by virtue of their apparent size and strength, the mountains and the seas. What they could not do—hold out against the Persian military juggernaut—the Spartans did. (Of course, Parmenio's readers knew that the Spartans ultimately succumbed to an overwhelming force.) The kenning that Parmenio employs is clever: the "changed paths of earth" he quickly interprets for the reader in the striking images of "sailing on the mainland" and going "afoot upon the deep." The closing phrase of "mountains and seas" is an effective return to the same pretty figures. Although addressing topographical features (mountains and seas) as representatives of deity is traditional, staging the address in the form not of prayer but of accusation achieves a certain fresh effect. An argument could be made, on Ricoeur's grounds, that the accomplished use of figures used here do initiate a "redescription" of the event at Thermopylae that culminates in the epitaph as a whole; however, the poverty of the metaphors tends to defeat the attempt, that is, the figures already had become clichés, such that they add nothing to a reader's repertoire of understanding the world. They merely justify the commemoration.

In his epitaph upon these same soldiers, Simonides' also employs prosopopeia, but rather than addressing the landscape, he has the dead themselves speak to the passers-by

who chance upon the monument. Their address to the living is pregnant both with meanings and questions. Whoever would take the message back to their fellow Spartans (the Lacedaemonians) would find it difficult to paraphrase, for example, "we lie here obeying your orders" without abandoning its ambiguities. Underlying the entire message is the question of whether or not their obedience was truly worth their sacrifice, since they were betrayed by one of Thermopylae's own residents and ultimately failed in their efforts. Parmenio skillfully uses figures to make a point about a type of courage already recognized—the epitaph is a form of paideia, or perhaps even propaganda. On the other hand, Simonides uses figure as a cataylst that works upon the liminal structures of courage—those thresholds of bodily experience out of which individual acts of courage arise, the grounds upon which the *logos* of courage emerges. In this way it achieves a redescription of the world that both articulates and confuses, teaches and confounds, reveals and withdraws.

Simonides also wrote two epigrams on the battle at Plataea, one for the Athenians and one for the Spartans. The first is written in the voice of those who died; the second is a straightforward announcement:

Εἰ τὸ καλῶς θνήσκειν ἀρετῆς μέρος ἐστὶ μέγιστον
ἡμῖν ἐκ πάντων τοῦτ' ἀπένειμε Τύχη·
Ἑλλάδι γὰρ σπεύδοντες ἐλευθερίαν περιθεῖναι
Κείμεθ' ἀγηράντῳ χρώμενοι εὐλογίῃ.

> If to die nobly is the chief part of excellence, to us out of all men Fortune gave this lot; for hastening to set a crown of freedom on Hellas, we lie possessed of praise that grows not old. (3.1)

The elliptical structure of the first two lines comprises a wonderfully compacted logic. It is a definition, but it is not a tautology because the predicate adds information, enlarging the subject to include of a new set of meanings. In one sense, dying nobly is set out as the greater part of a set of values that comprise excellence. To convey this information is to use a quantitative figure of possession such that of the "parts" that comprise "excellence" (which remains undefined in the epigram), dying nobly is the largest. Alternatively, or at the same time, the "chief part" can be taken, figuratively speaking, as a qualitative, rather than quantitative, superiority of part over part. In a third sense, the phrase can be understood as a definition in reverse, namely, as a statement that the most important thing to know about the topic of excellence is that one should die nobly. This reverse definition conveys new information as well; dying nobly introduces a whole world of dying. Finally, because of this reverberating interaction of dying and achieving excellence, we can see that the "lot" assigned to the fallen soldiers is a double one that includes two set of references: one is having died nobly, the other is the achievement of excellence. The first reference establishes a real death; the second establishes a moral reality that is no less real than the perishing of the physical body. The third and fourth lines let death lie, but they reserve for the soldiers a deathless honor.

In the second epitaph on the same subject, Simonides doubles the effect of the men's martyrdom:

Ἄσβεστον κλέος οἵδε φίλῃ περὶ πατρίδι θέντες

κυάνεον θανάτου ἀμθεβάλοντο νέφος·

Οὐ δὲ τεθνᾶσι θανόντες, ἐπεί σφ' ἀρετὴ καθύπερθεν

Κυδαίνουσ' ἀνάγει δώματος ἐξ Ἀΐδεω.

These men having set a crown of imperishable glory on their own land were folded in the dark cloud of death; yet being dead they have not died, since from on high their excellence raises them gloriously out of the house of Hades. (3.2)

In this case, having obtained that "chief part of excellence," it is they who live eternally, having been raised out of Hades, while they have at the same time obtained for their country an eternal life in the form of "glory" or fame. This glory nevertheless redounds as well upon the benefactors, the soldiers. Despite the grim imagery, then, the second epitaph is sanguine about death and denies its reality. Taken as epiphora, in both epitaphs Simonides brings alongside his stylized obituary a supplement intended to refer to a new and different state of affairs. The first epitaph allows the dead to speak in chorus, and when they do, they acknowledge a type of good fortune that turns the tables on the bad fortune of death itself; yet, death is not denied, and the reader understands that their acknowledgment is one that only the living can attribute to them. On the other hand, the second epitaph makes an announcement of belief. The dead, although said to be alive, are not present in speech, and somehow their absence makes this credo unbelievable, however exalted the dead soldiers' state is said to be. That epitaph which is most a figure is, of the two, the epitaph that is most convincing.

Although it is difficult, then, to maintain a clear distinction between a "pure" epitaph and what might be called a philosophical epigram or proverb, perhaps there is a distinction to be made among the epigrams in terms of what we could call "thinking poetry" and "poetic thinking." Thinking poetry I take in Heidegger's sense, which Ricoeur seems to affirm, of the poet's discovery of a new cognitive landscape and an articulation of a "topology," that necessarily references both new and old realms of experience and lets the truth of Being appear. As Heidegger writes in his poem "The Thinker as Poet,"

> But poetry that thinks is in truth
>
> the topology of Being
>
> This topology tells Being the
>
> whereabouts of its actual
>
> presence. (12)

This thinking ". . . holds to the / coming of what has been, and / is remembrance" ("The Thinker as Poet" 10). In contrast, poetic thinking is the use of style to heighten the effect of a conclusion already established in language and tradition. It is vulnerable to "[t]he bad and thus muddled danger" of "philosophizing" ("The Thinker as Poet" 8). This distinction entails an aesthetic criterion that values thoughtful poetry more highly than poetic thinking because of its heuristic power to bring humans closer to the horizon of Being.

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ENDNOTES

1.Fiorillo also claims, however, that Onchi did not consider this "equivalence" as exhaustive and observes that later in his career Onchi extended his ascription of "lyrical" to that art which best captured "the subjective mood." (Fiorillo, John. "Viewing Japanese Prints: Koshiro Onchi" 2004. 8 August 2005 <http://spectacle.berkeley.edu/~fiorillo/texts/sosakutexts/sosaku_pages/onchi3.html> My thanks to Dr. Donald Poochigian, Department of Philosophy, University of North Dakota, for this reference.

2. Although on Riffaterre's premises the second reading indeed should be considered "semiotic," I note in Chapter Two that Riffaterre calls this reading "hermeneutic," thus raising the question of whether he is equivocating on the meaning of this term in its possible contexts of "meaning" and "understanding."

3. I capitalize *Lyric* when using it as a noun that refers to it as a subcategory of the genre of poetry.

4. According to Jaeger, the idea of art-for-art's-sake "does not appear in the great Greek poets" (35). The third chapter, therefore, of "Book One: Archaic Greece," in his *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture*, bears the title "Homer the Educator." "Hesiod's contemporaries viewed Homer primarily as a teacher," he claims, and "Hesiod is a poet because he is a teacher" (74).

5. Because the earliest known inscription in Greek is an hexameter line on a wine jug dated approximately 740 B.C.E., Havelock places the final development of writing using the Greek alphabet at approximately 700 B.C.E. He also argues that the line on this vase may have been inscribed considerably later than the vase was made (15). The line reads "who now of all dancers sports most playfully," and may have commemorated a dance contest for which the vase was a prize (Havelock 193).

6. Havelock borrows this term from Berkley Peabody in his review of Peabody's *The Winged Word.*

7. According to William Harris, for example, ancient Greece inherited Mycenaean values centered on a strict warrior code of honor, as subsequently reflected in Homer. By the time of Archilochus, however, these values had been destabilized, and the interests and values of the merchant class were exerting an influence on public morality (38-40). On the other hand, Archilochus is equally well known for a poem that, in legend at any rate, contained such malicious invective that it induced the person it was directed against to commit suicide.

8. These dates are derived from Havelock, particularly from his essay entitled "The Character and Content of the Code," where he provides a brief review of the "course of Greek literature" (146-147).

9. Even in Riffaterre's rigorous method, however, there remains a place for a musical analogy for this semiotic process, namely, "theme and variation," with one significant difference. In musical composition the theme is prominently announced first, making it a transparent point of comparison, while in Lyric the theme (matrix) may very well remain unstated (*Semiotics* 26).Variations, on the other hand, are made visible and "marked" as ungrammaticalities, destined for recognition in the second and subsequent hermeneutic readings as equivalent: "The text is in effect a variation or modulation of one structure—thematic, symbolic, or whatever—and this sustained relation to one structure constitutes the significance" (*Semiotics* 6).

10. De Man probably uses "Slavic" to include the Prague School of structuralism and Russian Formalism as influences upon Riffaterre. In his entry in *The John Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory*, Lubomir Dolezel claims that the Prague School actually "preempts much of the poststructuralist technique." Among its characteristic themes, according to Dolezel, is the contention that "[t]hanks to its empirical character, Prague school epistemology was able to overcome the postpositivistic split between sciences of nature (*Naturwissenschaften*) and human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*)."

11. A poem's complete explication, although theoretically possible because it is derived from a finite number of texts, is virtually unattainable for a single reader, who becomes involved in a recursive process of re-interpretation, "a kind of semiotic circularity" (*Semiotics* 166).

12. De Man makes this claim on logical grounds, which of course catches him in his own net, since any claim that he makes must, by definition, already be infected by metaphor.

13. Unfortunately this prayer to Aphrodite is the only extant complete poem by Sappho:

ποικιλόθρον' ἀθανάτ Αφρόδιτα
παῖ Δίοσ δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε,
μή μ' ἄσαισε μηδ' ὀνίαισι δάμνα,
πότνια, θῦμον,

ἀλλὰ τυίδ ἔλθ', αἴ ποτα κἀτέρωτα
τὰσ ἔμασ αὔδασ ἀίοισα πήλοι
ἔκλυεσ, πάτροσ δὲ δόμον λίποισα
χρύσιον ἦθεσ

ἄρμ' ὑπασδεύξαισα· κάλοι δέ σ' ἆγον
ὤκεεσ στροῦθοι περὶ γᾶσ μελαίνασ
πύκνα δίννεντεσ πτέρ ἀπ' ὠράνωθε-
ροσ διὰ μέσσω,

αἶφα δ' ἐξίκοντο· σὺ δ' ὦ μάκαιρα,
μειδιαίσαισ ἀθανάτῳ προσώπῳ
ἤρε' ὄττι δηῦτε πέπονθα κὤττι
δηῦτε κάλημμι,

κὤττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι
μαινόλα θύμῳ· τίνα δηῦτε πείθω
ἄφ σ' ἄγην ἐσ ζαν φιλότατα; τίσ σ', ὦ
Φάπφ', ἀδκήει;

καὶ γάρ αἰ φεύγει, ταχέωσ διώξει·
αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ', ἀλλὰ δώσει·
αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέωσ φιλήσει
κωὐκ ἐθελοισα

ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλέπαν δὲ λῦσον
ἐκ μερίμναν, ὅσσα δέ μοι τέλεσσαι
θῦμοσ ἰμέρρει, τέλεσον· σὺ δ' αὔτα
σύμμαχοσ ἔσσο.

Ornate-throned immortal Aphrodite,
wile-weaving daughter of Zeus, I entreat you;
do not overpower my heart, mistress, with
ache and anguish,
but come here, if ever in the past
you heard my voice from afar and acquiesced
and came, leaving your father's golden house, with
chariot yoked: beautiful swift sparrows
whirring fast-beating wings brought you
above the dark earth down from heaven
through the mid-air and soon they arrived;
and you, blessed one, with a smile on your immortal face
asked what was the matter with me this time
and why I was calling this time
and what in my maddened heart I most wished to happen for myself:
"Who am I to persuade this time to lead you back to her love?
Who wrongs you, Sappho? If she runs away, soon she shall pursue;
if she does not accept gifts, why she shall give them instead;
and if she does not love, soon she shall love even against her will."
Come to me now again and deliver me from oppressive anxieties;
fulfil all that my heart longs to fulfil,
and you yourself be my fellowfighter. (Campbell 53) (versification added)

14. In his introduction to Barnstone's *Greek Lyric Poetry*, William McCulloh argues that the first line of the couplet would have been a proper hexameter, with the second line substituting a spondee after the third and sixth foot.

15. All epigrams are taken from Mackail's *Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology*. Mackail numbers the epigrams in Roman numerals and his translations in Arabic numerals. For the sake of convenience, I follow the Arabic system assigned to the translations.

16. For example, Mimnernus' "*Ηβα μοι, φίλε θυμέ· τάχ' ἄλλοι ἔσονται / ἄνδρες, ἐγὼ δὲ θανὼν γαῖα μέλαιν' ἔσομαι.* [Be young, dear my soul : soon will others be men, and I being dead shall be dark earth.] (Mackail, *Select Epigrams* 12.6).

17. This inverse relationship of connotative value between matrix and poem, where the matrix is expanded in the poem into a reverse-image of itself, is an element in keeping with Riffaterre's theory as a whole, and is examined later in the chapter.

18. My thanks to Prof. Michael Beard for pointing out that Edward Said makes a similar point in *Beginnings* (1975): "[O]ne cannot have recourse [in structuralist practice] to a direct unfolding (as in the *Enfaltung* of hermeneutical interpretation) of the kernel of meaning within a statement . . . ." (327).

19. Neither Riffaterre or de Man call attention to the cultural dialogue figured in the transformation of the old cities' chimes, which faithfully ring the hours of the bourgeois working day, into the fanciful form of an elfin Andalusian dancer. Hugo certainly gives it a prominent role in his initial address to Flanders, "where the benumbed North warms itself in the sun of Castille and mates with the South." This dimension of the poem warrants inclusion in any full explication of the poem.

20. According to Kristeva, with the arrival of Nerval, Lautréamont, and Mallarmé, poetry "became a practice involving the subject's dialectical state in language" that was "the end of poetry as delirium . . . [or] literature as an attempted submission to the logical order" (*Revolution* 82). Kristeva here characterizes the subject's attempt to be fully rational as a self-subversive form of irrationality.

21. Kristeva offers only a general example of this diachronic phenomenon but one that is pertinent to Greek poetry: "the Pindaric obscurity that followed Homeric clarity and community" (*Revolution* 15). Clarity is valued when the symbolic order has been established; nothing must be found that escapes its thesis, and obscurity would threaten this linguistic surveillance. In this passage, however, it is possible that Kristeva uses *clarity* in her sense of the unalloyed signification in language of the semiotic chora and *obscurity* in the pejorative sense of a delirium produced by an overbearing reason (*Revolution* 82). Unfortunately, she offers no further comment.

22. Kristeva argues, for example, that theology attempts to foreclose semiosis and attain to a thesis wholly conformable to the symbolic (*Revolution* 80). Maritain, on the other hand, uses both mystical and moral experience as analogues to the experience of creative intuition (235, 236-7n).

23. This imperative is found in other epigrams, such as Callimachus' "say not that the good die" (Mackail, *Selections,* Sect. 3, LXVII).

24. According to Elizabeth Nitchie, the second line of an earlier version of the epigram read "Ere thy new light had fled." She speculates that "there was a later manuscript showing 'new' as the result of further thought and revision. The repetition in the original Greek of the verb (ἔλαμπεσ . . . λάμπεις) tends to support the repetition of the adjective in the paraphrase" (277).

25. If the intended incompatibility of codes is not recognized, a simple misunderstanding occurs that ruins the joke and cancels communication.

26. In their articulations of the "intentional fallacy," New Critics made it axiomatic that speculation about authorial intention was illegitimate, and in this sense they anticipated what also can be recognized in structuralism as a move toward reader-response criticism. Their metaphor of a poem as an icon or, in T. S. Eliot's phrase, as an "objective correlative" of the poet's experience, however, leaves them in the realm of hermeneutics rather than structuralism and does not diminish for them the author's importance and presence. Structuralists and post-structuralists, on the other hand, are inclined to invert the relationship between author and text. Thus Foucault, for example, can redefine *author* merely as "a certain functional principle" involved in the dissemination of meanings (352-53).

27. "Because the subject is always *both* semiotic *and* symbolic, no signifying system he produces can be either 'exclusively' semiotic or 'exclusively' symbolic, and is instead necessarily marked by an indebtedness to both" (*Revolution* 24).

28. Even the majority of epigrams categorized under "Life" in Mackail's *Selections* are in the temper of, for example, Palladus's Πολλὰ λαλεῖς ἄνθρωπε, χαμαὶ δὲ τίθῃ μετὰ μικρόν· σίγα, καὶ μελέτα ζῶν ἔτι τὸν θάνατον." [You talk much, O Man, and after a little while lie in the earth; / be silent, and while living, think on death.] (Mackail, *Selections*, Sect. 12, XLVII) or, in the wry vein of Julianus Aegyptius' "Πολλάκι μέν τόδ' ἄεισα, καὶ ἐκ τύμβου δὲ βοήσ· πίνετε, πρὶν ταύτην ἀμπιβάλησθε κύνιν." [I often sang it, and even from the grave will cry it: "Drink, before you put on the clothes of death"] (12.12).

29. Kristeva also uses an analogy of "internal" music: "[T]he space underlying the written is rhythmic, unfettered, irreducible to its intelligible verbal translation; it is musical, anterior to judgment, but restrained by a single guarantee: syntax," and she claims that Mallarmé expresses his notion of the "mystery of literature" in this manner (*Revolution* 29).

30. Campbell notes that Sapphic authorship of this fragment is disputed as well as its arrangement in four, rather than two, lines (173).

31. From the essay "Words," in *On the Way to Language* (1971), translation by Joan Stambough.

32. The complete title of the dialogue is "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer." According to the translator, Peter D. Hertz, the dialogue was written on the occasion of a visit by Professor Tuzuka of the Imperial University, Tokyo, in 1953 or 1954 (199).

33. George Steiner observes that for Heidegger the only real question for philosophy is the one Leibnitz first posed as: Why is there something rather than nothing? Heidegger frames it in his own terminology as: "What is the Being [*das Sein*] which renders possible all being [*das Seiende*]?" (35).

34. Krell notes Heidegger's claim that the forms "τὸ ὀν" and "τὰ ὄντα," were derived from the ancient Ionian and Aeolian forms "τὸ ἐον" and "τ' ἐόντα." Liddell and Scott translate them respectively as "Being" and "the world of things" (7).

35. According to Werner Brock, this recognition of temporality can be understood as the production of time: "Whenever the understanding [Heidegger's 'running-forward-in-thought-to . . .'] projects its potentiality from the matter of its care, Time is produced by rendering it present, while the 'moment' arises from the authentic future" (82).

36. According to Krell, Heidegger, in his quotation of the Diels-Kranz translation, changes the semicolon that appears at the end of the last phrase to a colon (80).

37. Heidegger's conception of the "saying" that "disappears immediately" is dangerously close to silence, and, as we shall "hear" in Heidegger's exegeses of the poetry of Hölderlin, it is this very threat of not being able to "say" at all or, alternatively, to speak to an audience who hears nothing, that confronts the true poet.

38. In his essay "On the Essence of Truth," Heidegger emphasizes once again that concealment is the necessary attendant condition to the disclosure of ' $Αλήθεια$, even arguing that the term is derived from $λανθάνειν$ (to escape notice) (Brock 129).

39. Steiner adds that "memoration" is, from Heidegger's point of view, a "pre-logical"phenomenon (129-130).

40. These four essays were published together in English translation in *Existence and Being* (1949) along with an extensive introduction by Werner Brock.

41. The major essays (largely drawn from lectures and addresses) are "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry" (1936), "Remembrance of the Poet" (1943), "What Are Poets For" (1946), ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . .," (1951), "Language in the Poem" (1953), and "Words" (1958).

42. Not unexpectedly, Heidegger judges that Rilke does not quite rise to Hölderlin's standard, although he concedes there are instances of "valid" poetry among his works, which he faithfully points out in the body of the essay (*Poetry, Language* 96-98).

43. Where Heidegger has not provided the specific lines of a poem to which he refers, I cite page numbers, as well as stanza and line numbers of the poems when appropriate, in Michael Hamburger's 1967 bilingual edition of selected poems by Hölderlin.

44. "According to Heidegger, he [Hölderlin] meditates on the "Holy" just as the true philosopher meditates upon "Being" (Brock 121-22).

45. Heidegger assumes that the poem is autobiographical, pointing out that Hölderlin in the spring of 1801 made such a journey "back over the Bodensee from the Thurgau town of Hauptwyl near Konstanz to his home in Swabia" (*Existence and Being* 243).

46. In his essay "Words," Heidegger relates the notion of "singing" to what he has described in *Early Greek Thinking* as λέγειν 'Saying': "Singing is the gathering of Saying in song. If we fail to understand the lofty meaning of song as Saying, it becomes the retroactive setting to music of what is spoken and written" (*On the Way* 148).

47. Michael Hamburger's translation, however, would vitiate Heidegger's interpretation of this line. He takes the pronoun *others* to refer to *cares* rather than to the people of the homeland: "Whether he likes it or not, and often, a singer must harbour / Cares like these in his soul; not, though, the wrong sort of cares" (261).

48. In "The Nature of Language," Heidegger asks, "What is it that the poet reaches?" and answers, "Not mere knowledge. He obtains entrance into the relation of word to thing. . . . The word itself is the relation which in each instance retains the thing within itself in such a manner that it 'is' a thing" (*On the Way* 66).

49. The complete first line, from which the title is taken, is "In lovely blueness with its metal roof the steeple blossoms. '*In lieblicher Bläue blühet mit dem metallenenen Dache der Kirchthurm.*' (Hamburger 600). Heidegger comments only in passing that "it [the poem] comes to us by a curious route" (213). Michael Hamburger explains further that the poem first appears in Wilhelm Waiblinger's novel *Phaeton* (1823). Since Waiblinger (also a poet) spent considerable time with Hölderlin, and apparently had access to some of Hölderlin's unpublished manuscripts, Hamburger speculates that Waiblinger indeed may have adapted the poem "from one or more poems given to him by Hölderlin and now lost,

possibly adding and omitting passages in the process" (612-13). Hamburger formats it as a prose-poem; it appears in verse form in *Poetry, Language, Thought*.

50. Heidegger's parenthetical references are citations of a German edition of Hölderlin's works published by Propyläen-Verlag, Berlin, 1914 (*Existence and Being* 232).

51. Hamburger translates *Gespräch* as "discourse" (438).

52. According to Hamburger, Hölderlin's "madness" dates from 1806, when he was admitted to a clinic in Tübingen. He was later placed under foster care and apparently lived there in relative tranquility until his death, occasionally writing poetry. "In Lovely Blueness . . ." is from this period (16).

53. The essay was first presented as a lecture in 1951, then published in *Vorträge und Aufsatze* in 1954 (Hofstadter xxiv).

54. Steiner comments that according to Heidegger, "The nerve of poetry is the act of *nomination*. . . . The underlying motif here, familiar to Pietist thought, is of Adam's nomination in the Garden of every living thing" (145).

55. De Man notes that even in Friedrich Beissner's critical edition of Hölderlin's works, accepted as the most authoritative collection to date, there remain unresolved questions about the exact texts of some important poems (248).

56. *Rule of Metaphor* is based on a seminar held at the University of Toronto in 1971 (3). Its French title is *La Métaphore Vive*; however, translator Robert Czerny chose to use a certain "metaphorical suggestiveness" in his translation of the title that he hoped would convey Ricoeur's sense of metaphor as both following rules of language and itself ruling a certain domain of language, as well as Ricoeur's frequent recollection of Aristotle's maxim that the touchstone of genius in poetry and rhetoric is the mastery of metaphor ("Translator's Introduction" vii).

57. The context for Aristotle's quotation is the Odyssey (XIV, 213). Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, says to his swineherd: "I think that, looking on the stubble, you will recognize my former strength . . . ."

58. Aristotle also takes up this topic in *Poetics*, 1457 b 7.

59. After commenting in *Poetics* (1459a) that the "token of genius" in a writer is knowing how to use metaphor, Aristotle writes, "τὸ γάρ εὖ μεταφέρειν τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν ἐστιν." Since English does not have an infinitive form of *metaphor*, the translator must use a phrase such as "the right use of metaphor . . ." The phrase occurs also in the *Rhetoric* (1412a): "Δεῖ δὲ μεταφέπειν, καθαπερ εἴρεται πρότεπρον, ἀπὸ οἰκείων και μὴ φανερῶν, ..." The Loeb translation avoids the infinitive:

"As we have said before, metaphor should be drawn from objects which are proper to the object, but not too obvious; . . . ." (407).

60. *Poetics* 1457 b 7: *Μεταφορὰ δέ ἐστιν ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορὰ ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους ἐπὶ ἔδος ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἴδους. . . .* "Metaphor is the application of a strange term either transferred from the genus and applied to the species. . . . ." (81).

61. This means that Saussure, for example, erred in treating language as a system composed entirely of signs. More accurate, according to Ricoeur, is the distinction Émile Benveniste makes in *Problems of General Linguistics* between semiotics and semantics—that semiotics has to do with the elements of a sentence (signs) whereas semantics has to do with units of language (beginning with the sentence) (69).

62. According to Ricoeur, Fontanier unfortunately inherited and then bequeathed a conception of language that nouns can somehow bestow names. I. A. Richards, among other rhetoricians, has since demonstrated that nouns do not carry a "proper" or "real" meaning; they derive meaning from context. It is at the sentence level that reference is achieved: words sign, sentences refer (76).

63. Ricoeur notes in this context Monroe Beardsley's affirmation in his *Aesthetics* (1958) that when a new metaphor is used "something develops in the language" (97). Following Beardsley, we can say that a new metaphor is "a semantic innovation without status in the language as something already established with respect to either designation or connotation" (98).

64. According to Ricoeur, this in the end is what separates the followers of Saussure from the followers of "Carnap, Wittgenstein, and so on, for whom semantics is fundamentally the analysis of the relationships between signs and the things denoted" (124).

65. Ricoeur in fact suggests that rather than metaphor, "metonymy—one name for another name—remains a semiotic process, perhaps even the substitutive phenomenon *par excellence* in the realm of signs. Metaphor—unusual attribution—is a semantic process, in the sense of Benveniste, perhaps even the *genetic* phenomenon *par excellence* in the realm of the instance of discourse" (198).

66. Ricoeur notes that both Benveniste and Frege hold that "semiotics is an abstraction from *semantics*, which relates the internal constitution of the sign to the transcendent aims of reference" (137). Semiotics is "subordinate" to semantics in that "the sign owes its very meaning as sign to is usage in discourse" (137) Ricoeur does concede, however, that at least for Frege, the sense/reference schema nevertheless "applies only to scientific statements, and seems quite clearly to be denied to poetic statements" (220).

67. Here we can recall (from Chapter One) Eric Havelock's comment that mythos is "is displayed at a second 'diachronoic level' of the memory; the song [text] is a 'feedback'" (Havelock 157).

68. Ricoeur's reference to "a world" as opposed to "the world" should not, I believe, be taken as an allusion to "possible worlds" but rather in its ordinary sense of "the world" of space and time. The thrust of his argument, in *The Rule of Metaphor* at least, reaches only to a claim that mimesis reminds readers of their own experience as physical and historical human beings.

69. Ricoeur, however, is not willing to go as far as Nelson Goodman, for example, who in *Languages of Art* contends that "[i]n aesthetic experience the *emotions function cognitively*." (qtd. in Ricoeur 231). While Goodman places metaphor in a generalized theory of denotation, Ricoeur insists there are relevant and helpful distinctions to be made in terms of the "rightness" of descriptions and the redescriptions of art (Ricoeur 239).

70. The *Palatine Anthology*, for example, included 750 "sepulchral" epigrams, in contrast to 380 "amatory" epigrams and 358 "dedicatory" epigrams (Mackail 7).

71. Bergk, for example, argues that this epitaph should be combined with another two-line epitaph in the *Palatine Anthology* (vii.511), also attributed to Simonides, that would provide a name. Mackail, on the other hand, believes this merger doesn't work, adding that in many cases the names of the persons memorialized in the epitaph were inscribed apart from the epitaphs themselves (Mackail 364).